LOUIS XIV

By Louis Bertrand

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STATUE OF LOUIS XIV AT MONTPELLIER

LOUIS XIV

BY

LOUIS BERTRAND

TRANSLATED BY

CLEVELAND B. CHASE

Not only were great things
done during his reign, but
it was he who did them.
—VOLTAIRE, "Letter to Lord Harvey"

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BERTRAND

LOUIS XIV

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TO THE MEMORY OF

AUGUSTE DE MASSILIAN

TO FRANÇOIS DE BAICHIS

TO ALL MY FRIENDS IN MONTPELLIER

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

L. B.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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LOUIS XIV

LOUIS XIV

PROLOGUE

I SHALL never forget the profound emotion I felt when, in October, 1900, I first saw the statue of Louis XIV on the Terrasse de Peyrou, in Montpellier.

At one end of the old Rue Royal, silhouetted across the opening of a triumphal arch, a horseman with arrogantly outstretched arm seemed to lord it over the surrounding country. This Cavalier in bronze rushed forward through space in such god-like flight that all was humbled before him. Bare legs pressed tight against the horse, a military cape falling close over the animal's flanks, the girth inlaid with copper and bordered with sheepskin, the heavy breastplates projecting from beneath a splendid cuirass highly embossed like the Vatican Augustus, the hair, Apollo-like, thrown back and laurel crowned, he waves his commander's baton out over the plains. No inscription on the pedestal, not even a name, as though such glory shamed the modern town.

But, facing the statue, on the triumphal arch, this dedicatory inscription in impressive capitals:

LVDOVICO MAGNO LXXII ANNOS REGNANTE
DISSOCIATIS REPRESSIS CONCILIATIS GENTIBVS
QVATVOR DECENNALI BELLO CONIVRATIS
PAX TERRA MARIQUE PARTA

How that Latin sentence, so concise as to be hardly translatable, rang in my ears! "Louis the Great reigned seventy-two years. In fourteen years of war having isolated, vanquished or won over the foes conspired against him, peace finally reigns on land and on sea—*pax terra marique parta!*" Doubtless the beauty of the setting had much to do with my emotion—the sea and the Cévennes in the distance, the bay bathed in sunset colors, and, at the end of the terrace, the dome of a fountain, as exquisite as a tiny antique temple. There can be no doubt that I was greatly moved. Imagine my intellectual and emotional reactions to such an event, coming as it did at a moment when we were just emerging from the oppressive dreariness of the naturalistic movement and were still suffering from the burden of Defeat—a moment when I was naturally inclined to exaggerate my country's humiliation! Mine must have been like the almost religious veneration of some provincial African under the Roman Emperors who had wandered into the Forum and, stopping before the Arch of Titus or that of Septimius Severus, deciphered the inscriptions commemorating their victories. But the African of those days was a stranger in Rome, whereas I was returning to the land of my birth, to a country that I had never learned sufficiently to understand or to admire, but which I loved with my whole soul. At last I had discovered the figure, symbolic of this poor, humiliated country, that I had wanted so desperately to find.

To me this Cavalier in bronze became a symbol of France, of a France closely related to the land whence I had just come—the Africa of the great Roman ruins, of basilicas and triumphal arches. The analogy struck me at once. France under Louis XIV, like ancient Rome, spoke a language intelligible to the whole world. In that respect she was really imperial and supreme. There is something local or provincial about even the greatest of the cathedrals. Even the smallest building conceived and decorated by an artist of the period of Louis XIV has an air of catholicity, of universality; it was designed to uplift mankind.

But it was not merely the glory of France that was revealed to me on the Terrasse de Peyrou. I also gained a better understang of my own life. This bareback rider on his stallion, this heroic figure at once ancient and modern, this generous conqueror bringing with him peace on land and sea—*pax terra marique parta*—this heroic promoter of order, intelligence and beauty, whose acts were accomplished with grandeur and nobility, and yet without violence or over-emphasis, with an exquisite sense of balance—this in truth was the very phantom I had been pursuing across the sands of Africa.

I was still too steeped in romanticism to be clearly and definitely conscious of this new lesson. But slowly I was being cured and was coming to a more accurate estimate of the French heritage. I was learning what is the true, unchanging France that persists rational, sober, strong, through all changes of government. So forcefully did this triumphant conception take hold of my imagination that I entitled the first chapter of the book I was then writing: "*Ludovico magno imperante*—In the reign of Louis the Great, Emperor."

Thus Montpellier helped me to understand Versailles. I could never have comprehended the grandeur of the classic art of Versailles, had I not first been familiar with Latin Africa, had I not handled fragments of capitals and bas-reliefs chiselled out by Roman artists, and known the various methods of decoration employed by the ancients. I had need to travel far in order to realize how incomparable is the Château of Versailles. It is certain there is nothing like it anywhere; it is definitely unique. But this splendidly harmonious group of buildings, gardens, and fountains seemed to me enveloped in the deathly stillness of a cemetery; everything was labelled, catalogued, and preserved under glass for eternity. I thought of Versailles as the past, as a world that was ended, from which one might derive only æsthetic emotions and a certain vague nostalgia. My old romanticism was slow to die.

Meanwhile I was haunted by the memory of the silhouetted horseman in bronze, the Man of Glory, whom I had seen upon the terrace at Montpellier, the laurel crowned Apollo rushing by on a stallion, his commander's baton in his extended hand. It was a friendly and intriguing memory; a symbol, the implications of which I had not yet fully grasped, which piqued my curiosity. Moreover, as my experience became broader and my understanding of French life more profound, I was amazed to see for myself how fully this illustrious man in death still lives in modern France, and how deeply he influences our own lives. I never come away from any provincial town without realizing that he has left an almost indelible mark upon it.

He re-made France in his own image. With his engineers and architects, he laid out public squares, planted

the trees and flowers along the walks and esplanades, built a Hôtel de Ville and a National Theatre in the smallest provincial capital, had water conduits installed in the streets, built monumental fountains everywhere, laid out roads, constructed fortresses, dredged harbors. The national museums are still filled with the work of his painters, his sculptors, his decorators. He went still further. He fashioned the souls, the feelings, the minds of his countrymen. Our souls are still both heroic and gentle, as were those of the men of his day, as was his own. There is the same social quality in our attitude toward life. We need to share our sensations, to be sorrowful or elated in common. We have also the same need to think clearly, methodically, rationally, that was characteristic of the great prose writers of his age. Our democratic conceptions of life come from him, that conception of a social order open to all men of ability in which personal merit takes precedence over birth. Our rules of social procedure are those that he and his courtiers established. In the best sense of the word, France remains the salon which he wished it to be, modelled after the example he set at Versailles.

Thus when I came to realize how much has survived of what he achieved, and what a profound impression he had made upon the manners and customs, upon the very soul of my country, I began to think of Louis XIV as the most typical Frenchman in history, as the French representative in the Supreme Council of all ages and all nations. Greece has Homer; Rome, Virgil; England, Shakespeare; Italy, Dante; Germany, Goethe—all poets and intellectuals. France has Louis XIV, a man of action, who yet sums up in his being all of her poets and intellectu-

als, in the sense that it was he who caused their art, their thought, their poetry, to become an integral part of his country's life. I am not competent to judge whether or not Dante is the complete expression of all that is Italian. But I do know that Louis XIV is the complete expression of what is French. He is the great Frenchman of all time. He is even more than that. He is the most fully rounded type of the modern Latin that has yet appeared, just as Saint Augustine is of the African Latin. The same fascination that impelled me to study the latter drew me toward the former.

Then came the Great War; it served to reveal to me in full qualities that I had heretofore only vaguely felt to be present in this hero. It taught me to understand the complete genius of Louis XIV. At last I realized what a truly great leader was this man *whose whole life was spent in making war*. It was he who fashioned modern France. He established her frontiers and planned a line of defence that we were too prone to forget in 1914, just as we had been too quick to forget the lessons in military and diplomatic strategy that he had taught us. Had we devoted more attention to the details of his campaigns, we should have recalled that the Germanic invasions have always come by way of the Oise valley. We should not have disregarded the importance of Maubeuge, of Lille, of the Flemish fortifications and those on the Somme. Above all we would have found comfort in reflecting upon the history of this King of France who for forty years was able to resist the combined efforts of the nations of Europe united against him, and who proudly displayed his motto: "*Alone against all.*" Except during those last years of his life when he was sick and wasting away,

crushed by the weight of misfortune and afflictions in his own household, he showed an imperturbability in the face of direst conditions, and an inflexible determination to carry on to the end and to win out by perseverance. In the midst of the War of the League of Augsburg he appropriated funds for the re-gilding of the dome of the Invalides; with heavy heart at the moment of the defeats at Ramillies and Malplaquet, he still sponsored the usual round of balls, concerts, and festivals, as if to fling his disdain for defeat in the face of the enemy, to show them that his confidence was unshaken, his belief in eventual victory unwavering. Is the heroism of such an attitude lost to the present generation?

In this great leader, the administrator was even more remarkable than the warrior. He was able to maintain this long war against all Europe without completely exhausting his subjects, bankrupting France or ruining his own credit. He made possible the eighty years of unexampled material prosperity that followed his reign. From the first, he set himself a programme of achievement that would have overwhelmed anyone else; but he carried it out successfully in so far as he did not attempt the impossible. He created a system of finances, an army, a navy, colonies, and national commerce and industry. He organized a system of defence, as well as of attack. He made a careful appraisal of the resources of the nation and developed them systematically. Finally, by creating academies and centres for the arts and crafts, and by paying them homage himself, he secured a European and world-wide renown for the French intelligence. If ever in history there has been an embodiment of the Renaissance ideal of "the complete hero," of the human being endowed

with the widest possible range of talent and appreciation, it must be granted that it was Louis XIV. It has been said that he was the first of the Napoleons. Napoleon doubtless possessed greater genius, but he was less rounded, less subtle, above all, less balanced and practical. Louis XIV was the combination of Latin realism with French balance and common sense.

What hero in fiction can compare with this administrator and warrior? Busy as he was, he found time to be a lover—at times, a Don Juan; he was fond of all that was beautiful and had a passion for buildings, gardens, fine furniture, beautiful paintings, and sculpture; he was mad about music and literally lived to the sound of violins; he was enamored of beautiful language and he himself spoke exquisite French. He was, as the Abbé de Choisy once remarked to him, "a true monarch in the realm of fine diction." Finally, his ambition was to achieve the greatest possible glory for France, as for himself. To a novelist on the lookout for a supremely great character, a character with a personality rich and deep, the fascination of such a man is irresistible! Ever after my experience at Montpellier I was obsessed by this great figure. Each year I would return to the Terrasse du Peyrou and sit deep in thought at the foot of the bronze Cavalier, looking out toward the sea and the Cévennes. Thus it was that I came to write this book. I did it because of the grandeur of the subject, because a hero of this sort fitted in perfectly with all my dreams since those far-off days when I had followed the course of Rafael and his companions across the Southern plains of French Africa. I did it because no other individual has reflected greater honor upon my country, because on the morrow of the

great crisis we have just passed through it would be impossible to find a more bracing, a more edifying figure to contemplate, and finally—why say more?—because this glorious subject enchants me.

The Louis XIV who follows was, therefore, born of the late war. Today, alas, we know all too well what war is, what obligations and sacrifices it entails; we doubtless will be more indulgent than our elders toward this leader whose whole reign was an unending war—a war which, despite frequently repeated calumnies and the assertions of near-sighted men, had no other aim than to maintain the safety and the greatness of France. Louis XIV waged purely national wars. It was not for him to avoid them. Even without the promptings of his desire for glory, circumstances would have forced him to it. It was necessary that France be able to pursue her course in peace, if not behind natural frontiers, then at least behind a line of defence capable of halting any invasion. I venture to say that it is because they have never realized how definitely Louis XIV was forced into war, that modern historians have belittled this great Frenchman, and have failed to understand and have misjudged his reign.

I, for my part, would study it from quite a different point of view. Of course I have no intention of using him as a puppet by means of which to glorify absolute monarchy as an institution. The regime founded by Louis XIV is dead; it is a matter of history and, in certain respects, of archæology. But there are general rules which must be followed by any government desirous of perpetuating itself and fulfilling its natural functions. Such rules never lapse, nor are they outdated, as is some-

times naïvely thought by those who look upon the passing of time as synonymous with progress. Politics is no more capable of unlimited improvement than morality, the arts, or collective thought. More than anything else, a nation is the product of will power, intelligence, perseverance, and self-sacrifice; it is the fruit of an unceasing and successful struggle carried on against the forces of disorder and anarchy that perpetually threaten. It is, therefore, a great step forward to bring a nation to the full realization of its powers. As soon as the national will weakens and gives in to the powers of disorder and anarchy it means that decadence has set in; it marks the beginning of national disintegration and a return toward barbarism. The national organism no longer reacts in a healthy manner. And reaction is the first rule of life.

Thus to regard as "advanced" those social or political theories which lead straight not only to national ruin, but to the destruction of all civilization, to the negation of humanity itself, is indeed an incredible aberration of the mind. And so too is it incredible that general rules of government should be held "outdated" when in all parts of the world and in all ages they have helped to build up the greatest nations and the most enviable civilizations. Contrasted with the feeble, anarchistic, or barbaric regimes that preceded it, that followed and will hereafter follow it, a national organization such as that achieved by Louis XIV represents tremendous progress.

I shall examine Louis XIV psychologically and shall attempt to understand the inner workings of his mind before pronouncing judgment upon his actions; I undertake this task as an historian and novelist who is interested in following the intellectual and spiritual reactions of a

very unusual man. Following the Aristotelian formula, I think of the real plot and drama of the study as nothing more than the exposition of the means by which the individual enriches himself by experience and gradually approaches perfection.

The life of Louis XIV is an historical drama without equal. Moreover, no one has ever attempted a psychological study of the Great King. There have been full length portraits of him done from the *outside,* in which his various acts have been either somewhat distorted or more or less completely understood. He has never been considered from the point of view of what actually took place *within* him. I hope to make as complete and careful a psychological examination of him as possible; I shall try to make my picture of this extraordinary man a better likeness and, particularly, a more lively one than those which have preceded. Lastly, I shall consider this great creator of modern France from a distinctly French point of view. Despite his numerous deficiencies and all the things he failed to do, I shall confine myself to the question: "What did he do for France that was profitable and lasting, what that was fine and glorious?"

I SHALL not attempt to conceal the difficulties that confront me. The danger most to be feared was that I might lose myself in the endless labyrinth of so vast a theme. Having limited it and restricted it to a study of the King himself, to the analysis of his complex soul, to the dramatic presentation of Louis XIV both as man and ruler, I discovered that the labor entailed was still great, if not, indeed, boundless. For several years I read all that I could

upon the subject, paying special attention to what had already been printed. I recalled Brunetière's witty remark: "*Le véritable inédit, c'est l'imprimé,—que personne ne lit.*" ("The really undiscovered sources are those that have been printed—and that no one reads.") I had frequent occasion to attest the truth of his remark, which is scarcely even paradoxical. Lastly, I fell back upon the assistance of recognized authorities, and enlisted the collaboration of those whom I thought most competent to help me.

But the greatest obstacle I had to overcome was the resistance, not to say the hostility, of one entire section of the public. I found myself confronted with a huge collection of untrue and prejudiced ideas about Louis XIV which quite distorted him; I was forced to refute these legends before I could even begin my own portrait of him.

This entire period in French history must be rewritten. It has been outrageously falsified by partisan writers who prove themselves both ignorant and silly. In a general way, the history of all Catholic countries—especially that of Spain, such as it was written during the nineteenth century—is a distressing collection of nonsensical observations.

That part of it that has to do with Louis XIV is highly unjust, even scandalous in its unfairness to him. This unfortunate king finds himself opposed by almost everyone. Foreigners, first of all, are against him because the descendants of those whom he defeated have retained the hatred, the jealousy, the bitterness which their ancestors felt toward him. Among the French themselves he is detested by those who oppose absolute power; not merely by the republicans, but by a great many royalists who are no

longer able to comprehend and to appreciate the beauty and wisdom of the organization he wrought. Among the royalists, the feudalists have never forgiven Louis XIV for having broken the power of the nobility; the landed proprietors, for having centralized the government and for having taken their special privileges away from them. The Catholics dislike him because of his persistent opposition to the Pope, because of his famous *Declaration of the Rights of the Gallic Church,* and what one might almost call his anticlericalism; the Protestants, because of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the very real persecution which they suffered during his reign.

To these natural and admitted opponents of his must be added the list of his sly and underhanded enemies—those mediocre and jealous souls who despise the thought of true glory or greatness, and who, tortured by their own uneasy consciences, whisper to their neighbors in the slanderous words of the poet:

That man is offensive; he doth shine too bright.

Hence come the malevolence, the implacable hatred which has distorted most records of the personality and the achievement of Louis XIV. There have even been a great many trained historians, who have been influenced by such absurd prejudices, and have gone out of their way to collect all possible material with which to belittle and disparage this great man. They have collected the abuse and slander that was concocted in the numerous laboratories set up, as was the case again in 1914, upon the French border solely for the manufacture and distribution of lies and propaganda. They have gathered "facts" from the gazettes and pamphlets that were pub-

lished in The Hague and Amsterdam; and even from books issued by "Pierre Marteau," *At the Sign of the Golden Sphere,* that Cologne publisher who was so obviously an agent of Germany or of England hiding his identity under a pseudonym. They have placed faith in the output of that suspicious shop from which came such a stream of filthy pamphlets filled with vile insults to the King and those close to him, and of supposed histories that were nothing but thinly disguised diatribes. They have ransacked the memoirs and letters of the rebellious and the dissatisfied and have singled out excerpts that were obviously prompted by hatred and bitterness. They have laid great store by the letters of the Princess Palatine who, even after she became the Duchess of Orleans, was still German at heart, scornful, jealous, disparaging, and conceited in her attitude toward all that was French. They have given the most serious consideration to the reports of the Huguenot Ezechiel Spanheim, the spiteful ambassador of the future King of Prussia. They have based their judgment upon biassed witnesses. To them, Louis XIV has always appeared in the guise of one accused, who is condemned before he has had an opportunity to plead his case.

Why, for instance, have these men neglected such a source as "Les Rélations des Ambassadeurs Vénitiens"? I shan't insist that they should quote from those passages which occur on almost every page in which the ambassadors give evidence of their great admiration for Louis XIV, but why also omit their shrewd praise for his administrative gifts and his character? With deliberate bias they have recorded only the critical portions of this

work, the sentences here and there which refer vaguely to the perpetual misery of the common people.

These French historians are guilty of abominable injustice; they have judged a great Frenchman as only the most inveterate enemy of France would have done.

As for contemporary witnesses and those chosen from among his own subjects, these historians have confronted him with the testimony of such men as the narrow-minded Jansenists from Port Royal, unpractical idealists like Fénelon, the archbishop who was so eager to become Prime Minister and so thoroughly lacking in all political ability, who, without being conscious of the direction in which his ideas were leading him, was really an anarchist—with the estimate of members of the Parlement of Paris, blinded by the narrow prejudices of that body and incapable of grasping the true magnitude of the King's projects. But the most formidable of Louis XIV's enemies, the one whose peevish and malevolent criticism is responsible for the conclusions of almost all our historians, is Louis de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon, Chevalier of the Order of the Holy Ghost, Duke and Peer of France.

Not only was Saint-Simon a restless and discontented soul—and the son of an equally restless and discontented father (at the time of the Fronde, the father came perilously close to being a rebel and was certainly an enemy of the Regent and of Cardinal Mazarin)—but his vanity at being a Duke and a Peer of France, a vanity characteristic of newly created nobles, made him believe himself entitled to positions of the greatest responsibility. Moreover, he was a late-comer in this glorious reign. Born in 1675, he knew personally only its last years, the years of

the King's decadence and the national misfortunes. The Louis XIV whom he knew was no longer the inspired ruler who had created modern France; he was then merely a great man who had survived himself, so to speak, and had been left behind by the works of his own genius. Saint-Simon was rash enough to term him "a man of less than average intelligence." That is precisely what one thinks of that writer himself when one reads his "Mémoires." He was narrow minded, impassioned, violent, and short-sighted as a result of his class prejudices; he marshals against his enemies all the slander, all the silly chatter he can gather from Court circles, and even from servants, members of the guard, and stable hands—for he is not finicky about the sources of his gossip. So constantly does he falsify historical facts that the monumental edition of his works which M. de Boislisle annotated is an almost continual refutation of his statements. And if, despite all that, there is something of the artist in him, if he has a gift for satire, for picturesque invective, for characterizing people with a brutality so terrible and inescapable that it almost reaches the heights of genius, it is also true that too often he is a deplorably bad writer. No one has written more frightful gibberish than he at his worst, nor has anyone else done such violence to the language of Pascal, Bossuet, and La Bruyère.

One shudders to think that most historians have based their judgments of one of the greatest of Frenchmen upon such a hodgepodge of misstatements, pieced together by an unbridled imagination, upon the indictment and the biassed testimony of this embittered country squire. Thus beside the joy I experienced at finding an admirable human being beneath this heap of calumny, I felt in duty

PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV

By G. Edelinck

bound to attempt to do justice to this man whose character has been so absurdly distorted by political passions. In his "Réforme intellectuelle et morale," Renan wrote that the scorn of France for her own past is "the most shameful exhibition of ingratitude, pettiness and churlish vulgarity ever witnessed." It is, indeed, disgraceful that France should appear to disown such a glorious figure as Louis XIV, that she should not understand and appreciate the man who not only bequeathed her her place in the modern world, but who even made her what she is today, from the line of her frontiers to the workings of her administrative system. In the nineteenth century, Frenchmen were even afraid to inscribe his name on the pedestals of his own statues. Those at Lyon, Montpellier, and, amazing as it may seem, Versailles, are anonymous. They resorted to Latin to hide the meaning of the dedication on the monument in the Place des Victoires.

It was, in part, to atone for the injustice that has been done, that these pages were written.

CHAPTER I

PORTRAITS

HE seems like someone we ourselves have known—a familiar figure whom we might see at any time pass by in stately procession, on horse-back or in carriage, escorted by musketeers or a company of the guards. Certainly his features and his dress are more familiar to us than those of any similar personage in public life today. Presidents and Kings today appear before us as vague, uncertain silhouettes, more or less distorted by the too-hasty lens of a camera. For the most part contemporary notables have received slight attention at the hands of artists. Half-hidden in the dust of automobiles, hunted down like game by amateurs and professionals armed with kodaks, they are pale and formless phantoms that have never been allowed quite enough time to become really fixed and substantial. Louis XIV, on the contrary, possess the solidity and, in a way, the majesty of a monument. For almost a century he was looked upon and depicted with love and admiration by generations of painters, sculptors, engravers, and tapestry weavers who from the beginning of his reign were almost unanimous in their liking for him. In those days to be "Painter to the King" was no empty honor.

For that reason it is practically impossible to make a

PART ONE

THE CHILDHOOD OF A DICTATOR

"If you think it easy and pleasant to be a King, you are much mistaken."—*Louis XIV to Philip V.*

definitive catalogue of his portraits—there are too many of them. Especially are too many of them unknown. When M. André Pératé attempted to list the portraits of the King, limiting himself strictly to those at Versailles, he was forced to omit all group pictures in which Louis XIV was merely one of many persons represented, and devoted his attention solely to what he terms "the detached likenesses." Even thus limited, he admits that the field is extensive. What an undertaking it would be to pursue the likeness of the King not merely through the museums of Paris and of the provinces, but through museums and palaces all over the world, through public buildings, court houses, town halls, churches, convents, and even châteaux and private collections! Obviously they must be carefully classified; both artistically and as documents they are of unequal interest. Among the purely "official" portraits not only must all copies be excluded, but also copies of copies; we can retain only originals done from life, or pictures possessing some historical or archæological peculiarity—in other words, only portraits that actually contribute to our knowledge. Such an iconography of the great King is still to be produced. I venture to predict that important discoveries are still to be made in this line. In the jumbled store rooms of museums, for instance, there is a host of dust-covered, slowly-deteriorating canvases, disregarded on the pretext that they are of negligible æsthetic value, or that they are the work of obscure or anonymous painters. But might not these bad paintings reveal some unnoticed aspect of the royal countenance, an unrecorded detail of his dress, some slight touch of local color? That is why I deplore the fact that

connected with art museums proper no one has yet established a documentary annex where might be preserved, without regard to apparent worth, everything that pertains to the past—even when the Directors of the Museum are confident that a given piece of "junk" is lacking in all interest and significance. Some day or other, we may be sure, it will mean something to someone, it will have a lesson or a message for poet or historian.

Although a definitive iconography of Louis XIV is so far from completion, we already have enough portraits of him so that there is little new to learn about his appearance at any given period of his life. Of all the likenesses that I myself have seen, I now remember only those that have struck me as being really characteristic. When one has seen a great many of them, the trained eye easily picks out the mechanically produced copy, the laboriously traced drawing, some mere flourish of the fancy; and on the contrary the original drawing, the incisive and lifelike detail. Little by little these successive sketches of the same face become superimposed one upon the other, they fuse into one, and from this host of images arises a living form which breathes and walks and develops and slowly changes aspect before our eyes.

This was my experience with the portraiture of Louis XIV. I shall record the principal phases in his evolution as they have appeared to me during the course of a long and extensive inquiry, and as it has unfolded itself before my eyes in the folios of the Collection of Prints at the Bibliothèque Nationale housed in that beautiful gallery constructed and furnished by the godfather of Louis XIV, His Eminence, Cardinal Giulio Mazarini.

He first appears in the guise of a chubby little half-asleep brat with blond, almost brown hair, hazel eyes with drooping lids, a tiny nose so over-shadowed by the two bulging cheeks that one wonders that later it could have grown so large, high cheek bones, full lips, the lower one slightly protruding. One would be tempted to say at once that he resembles all other babies in the world were it not that in this little face one is immediately struck by obvious signs of its heredity; he recalls at once his father at the same age. There are the same thick lips, the same eyes, except for their fleeting resemblance to the lips, the eyes, the hair of his mother. From her at any rate come the full cheeks and the high cheek bones. One realizes that this brat, who seems at first sight so commonplace, comes of good stock.

As portraits were made of him from the time he was in swaddling-clothes—one might almost say from the moment he came into the world—it is natural that over a period of ten years painters have recorded decided modifications in his features. In the Museum at Versailles there is an anonymous canvas that pictures him a chubby lump of a child already decorated with the grand cordon of the Order of the Holy Ghost, in the arms of his nurse who is suckling him. Further on, another anonymous bust on the mantelpiece in the Hall of the Queen's Guards shows him at the age of four or five wearing a tiny breastplate of antique pattern. His bulging eyes and curly hair make his expression one of great sweetness and innocence. The real charm of this delightful portrait lies in the contrast between the martial dress and the childish face of the young King. It reminds one of the tiny wrestling Eros of Hellenistic sculpture. The picture is symbolic and in

a way prophetic. In this pudgy royal infant we catch a glimpse of the hero to come, of the future Emperor of the Franks—*Francorum Imperator,* as the inscriptions of his later reign put it.

Another portrait, which is in the Prado Museum in Madrid, apparently the work of one of the Beaubruns, represents him still younger—between two and three years of age. It is the picture of a little tot in a flat cap, a bib under his chin, with a long skirt that comes all the way down to his tiny feet, the whole covered by a pinafore almost as long as the skirt. He has the air of a little bourgeois from Marais or the Place Maubert. Yet around his neck like a scarf hangs the ribbon of the Order of the Holy Ghost, and under his chubby little hand is a royal crown which rests on a velvet cushion on a little stand. Except for the ribbon, he wears a simple household costume. This, doubtless, is a family portrait done for the relatives in Madrid. Anne of Austria was probably more than proud to show her brother Philip IV, who had so many children, that the House of France, too, had its heir. In the museum at Blois is a canvas done in the same style showing the royal child grown up a little, much more magnificently dressed and infinitely more martial in appearance. A scarf about his neck, he wears a lace frill and a rosette of red ribbons over an embroidered vest and a flowing skirt. Equipped with breastplate and sword, he is leaning awkwardly on a tiny little crimson-tipped pike. He seems a pretty boy, with light chestnut hair, a firm mouth, and almond-shaped, greyish-mauve eyes. (Note the changing, not to say indescribable color of his eyes.) Despite the warlike apparel, he is still the sweet, calm, sleepy-eyed youngster of the earlier portrait.

The martial costume is included to remind the world that he is the future monarch of a military kingdom.

They also attempted to remind all good Frenchmen, especially the devout, that he was both a descendant of Saint Louis and the eldest son of the Church. Thus in the portraits for popular use which were distributed far and wide throughout the kingdom, we see him in the act of being presented to the Blessed Virgin by his mother, "Good Queen Anne," his brother, the young Duke of Anjou, at his side. The Blessed Virgin is Our Lady of Paris in person, seated on a cloud holding the Infant Jesus in her arms. Kneeling in his royal mantle, which looks not unlike a night-gown, the young Prince with lowered eyes and folded hands receives the crown of France from the Infant Jesus Himself. In this modest and contemplative attitude, he looks like a very well-behaved and pious little boy making his first communion.

This picture of devoutness is doubtless edifying, but probably the most characteristic likeness of the King for this period is the portrait in the Prado which was sent to his uncle Philip—the chubby brat in bib, flat cap, and blue ribbon, standing beside the crown placed on a cushion, who is so dismayed by the pose they have made him assume. Certainly there is nothing precocious about this child; one might even think him stupid. It would take extraordinary shrewdness to predict his future from these rather heavy features. His is an unawakened spirit that will develop slowly, but already it is supported by a vigorous and ample nature.

WHEN we next see him he is approximately fourteen years old. One would say that he had never been through the

ALLEGORICAL PICTURE OF LOUIS XIV

Receiving his crown from the Infant Jesus

After a contemporary engraving

121089

awkward age. At any rate, it is a really handsome youth whom we see in another painting at the Prado, signed by Nocret. The open brow is half hidden by a wig, whose curls flow down over a superb lace collar. The doublet, richly embroidered in gold, has split sleeves which show a pleated white undervest gathered at the elbow with a flaming red ribbon. In his hand, which is encased in a heavy gauntlet, the youthful King clasps the baton of the Commander-in-chief. He wears a breastplate over a buff colored leather undervest which comes half way down his thigh. But these martial trappings are almost concealed by clusters of ribbons which cover his shoulder and a white silk sash thrown across his chest.

Surmounting this warrior's body one is surprised to see the almost feminine face with its naïve and unassuming expression. The signs of nobility in this countenance are much more pronounced than in his portraits as a child. This is the refined face of a young aristocrat. The rounded cheek bones and the full cheeks still recall his mother; but the long, oval chin seems even longer than it is because of the length of his nose, which has already assumed its final form. The lips are somewhat thick, like those of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria; they are red, sensual lips that stand out strikingly against his clear complexion, the complexion so often compared by contemporary poets to the rose and the lily. There are no traces of small-pox in this obviously idealized portrait. It is well known that when he was about ten years old the King contracted that dread disease, so common in those days that few escaped it. But even if, as Madame de Motteville says, it cost him "the beauty of his coloring"—his skin was so fresh and clear that it rivalled the most

delicate feminine complexion—it does not seem to have left him very seriously marked. It was doubtless necessary to look closely to see the scars at all. Here the painter has omitted all sign of them. What is more striking is the extreme gentleness of his expression and of those velvet-soft eyes which peer languidly out from beneath half-open, slightly-curving lids. Intelligence and will power are not as yet noticeable in this lovely youth who seems to have been created solely for the pursuit of love and pleasure. One might even find the sweetness of his expression a trifle naïve, were it not that the strongly marked and sensitive nose above the tight lips and the firm mouth prophesy the fox that was later to appear.

It was not without ulterior motives that this picture of the handsome youth was presented to his cousin in Madrid. It has been proved that as early as 1646, when the Dauphin of France was but eight years old, Anne of Austria and Mazarin planned to marry him to the Infanta, Maria Theresa. And she too thought of him almost from the moment the idea of a husband came into her head. We are told that from that time on she considered herself betrothed to her cousin in Paris. Perhaps this canvas by Nocret had some influence on ideas of the ugly, querulous little Infanta who, after so many conferences and so much haggling, finally became Queen of France and Navarre. At least, it is pleasant to think that as she crossed the salons of the Alcazar or the Retiro, she would sometimes stop mysteriously before this portrait of the unknown cousin, the young warrior in helmet and breastplate who looked so like a cherub.

A FEW years later the traces of flabbiness have disappeared and his face has become strikingly virile. Not that he has yet taken on the appearance of the future King, but, if one looks closely, one may already divine the dictator, the indomitable leader who, born gentle and amiable, made himself tough-fibred and almost brutal by will power and as a result of the seriousness with which he took his responsibilities.

In the museum at Aix-en-Provence there is a fine bust which, naturally, is attributed to Puget; it is supposed to represent Louis XIV at the age of eighteen or twenty. Both suppositions are false. As far as Puget is concerned, competent local experts have clearly demonstrated that he did not do the bust. And it is certainly not a portrait of Louis XIV. There is nothing in common between the face we have just described and that of the young Roman in wig, or short hair, who is shown in the bust at Aix. One is not even sure that he is a Roman. Perhaps instead he is a Gaul—a Gaul from southern France, from Provence, or the country around the Pyrenees. With thin lips and square, rather short nose, he is exactly the opposite of Louis XIV, and in no way recalls the King. It appears likely that this bust, which was designed to go in a niche, was destined to adorn some public building, probably the Hôtel de Ville. If this is true, and if the artist had any intention of depicting Louis XIV, it must be that his treatment was purely symbolic. This Imperator in breastplate and military cloak, this robust, muscular young soldier who has such a strikingly intelligent forehead, is a type such as the French in those days wished to think themselves—they, the conquering race, irresist-

ible because they combined strength with intelligence.

The real Louis XIV is quite different. At the age of twenty he is a soldier, but a very unostentatious soldier, who is applying himself anxiously to the disagreeable realities of a military career. For this period, the most accurate likeness of him is a full length portrait which belonged to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, the King's cousin, and which is now owned by His Royal Highness, the Duke of Vendôme, to whom I am greatly indebted for his kindness in allowing me to study it in his villa at Neuilly. This portrait is certainly the most realistic that had been done up to this time; it is one of the most original and characteristic of the paintings of the King. To whom should it be attributed? As usual, Mignard's name has been mentioned. It is safer to plead ignorance on this point and to be content with the statement that although it is a fine work of art, it is of even greater value as a document.

The King is in field uniform, with riding boots covered with powder-stains and mud from the trenches; he has on a leather jacket, such as was worn by the Poilus in 1914, and red breeches with a gold stripe down the sides; in his hand is a commander's baton. The doublet is of very simple yellow velvet. This rather severe costume is enlivened only by a blue ribbon that runs diagonally across his chest, and a pink one tied about his wrist, giving somewhat the effect of a modern wristwatch. The first detail to attract one's attention in this picture—and perhaps the most original thing about it—is that the pale scars left by the small-pox are plainly seen upon the vivid red of his face. His eyes, as nearly as one can judge their color, are brown; his high cheek bones accentuate the roundness of

his face; his features are less puffy than before, his complexion clear and bronzed by exposure to the sun and wind; above his heavy mouth is the wisp of a mustache. There is a martial, almost brutal air about him; his attitude is one of military rigidity. His eyes are fixed intently upon some distant point; he is gloomy, perhaps a trifle worried; he seems absorbed in the working out of some troublesome scheme. War is no fancy-dress amusement for this young man with muddied boots and anxious brow. This portrait is a splendid confirmation of the following description by one who knew the King personally; it appears among the apocryphal works of Bussy-Rabutin: "He is tall, with rather broad shoulders and fine legs; he dances well and is very good at all forms of physical exercise; he has something of the air and bearing of a monarch (that *something* should be noted; it shows that the King only slowly acquired his regal bearing. Further on we shall see the part played by will power in the development of his character);—his hair is almost black, his face pock-marked, his eyes soft, yet with a sparkle in them, his lips red; and yet *he certainly could not be termed handsome.*"

The Neuilly portrait is not that of an Adonis. Is it a better likeness than the others? I doubt it when I look at the famous bust by Bernini, which is now in the Salon de Diane at Versailles. This bust is later in date than the portrait I have just described, but it is designed to give us an idea of what Louis XIV looked like when he was a young man. It is done with thoroughly Italian brilliancy of technique; the artist does not quibble over questions of photographic precision or chronological accuracy; he is intent upon displaying his skill, and in that he succeeds

marvellously. But beneath the flourishes and additions that are due to the artist's conception of his subject, I distinguish the characteristic and hereditary features of that well known face; in it I see indications of those passions and those marks of genius which history has recounted to us or has allowed us to glimpse.

Once again we have the clear-cut and (must it be admitted?) slightly vulgar features to which we are already accustomed. The same full cheeks and wisp of a mustache, and the same thick lips. But there is more to it than that. This is the most striking, if not the handsomest bust of Louis XIV in existence. In a most arresting fashion it reveals the King's character and personality at the age of twenty. First we have what I shall call his voluptuous face; it is a vigorous face, full of life and passion. The eyelids show the tell-tale marks of feverish dissipation; the nostrils are distended; there are dark hollows under the eyes; the muscles of the face are drawn tight; he seems tired, worn out by love and unsatiated passion. He is the youthful lover of La Vallière, a Don Juan exhausted by his lust. But now look at him in profile. There is a sudden change in character. At first glance one is struck by his startling resemblance to Bonaparte, to the Corsican consumed by ambition, the young general of Arcole and Lodi. Is it surprising that this young Italian, Bernini, should have been quick to seize upon that in Louis XIV which recalls Julius Cæsar? The domineering profile of this twenty-year-old ruler is distinctly like that of the other Cæsar. The hollow cheeks and high cheek bones, the strong, obstinate chin, the aquiline nose, the heavy, arched eye-brows, the piercing

eyes looking far out into the distance, are all the same. First the face of the voluptuary, and then that of the man of destiny.

This too is an obviously idealized portrait, but it is not a misleading one. The artist has caught the basic characteristics of the King. Already they are perceptible; soon they will be apparent to all. But he has emphasized and exaggerated them in a somewhat romantic fashion. The real Louis XIV was much too reserved to betray himself in this manner, so much more characteristic of the southern races. The young ruler who is waiting for his hour to strike, who so patiently abides the psychological moment for him to take the stage, and who in the mean time disguises his real intentions—how penetratingly, with what nicety of judgment has Lebrun caught him in a little pastel which now hangs in the Louvre!

The profile is most unusual. The almost straight line made by the nose and the forehead is reminiscent of the Greek portraits. One thinks instantly of the profile of his brother, "Monsieur," in the disturbing portrait in the collection of the Duke of Vendôme at Neuilly. Under an extraordinarily long, thin, and altogether elegant nose, appears the full-lipped, red mouth, upon which the slight mustache forms hardly a shadow. The eyes are prominent and, with grey-mauve iris and black pupil, give him a strange expression. His skin is delicate and without the least trace of pock marks; his complexion recalls the classic "lily and rose" comparison of the poets. The total effect of nostrils, mouth, and eyes is one of voluptuousness and a rather cruel sensuality; but this is at once counteracted by his fine, aristocratic nose and by the sharpness of

his domineering glance; it is softened by the impression of good-nature that his full cheeks and round and massive face make.

This youthful face combines the most contradictory qualities; in it the basest and the noblest impulses are to be found side by side. There is about it a certain indefinable sense of secretiveness, of suppression, of cruelty, and of cold calculation. What commands will this voluptuous mouth give; what are the thoughts beneath this troubled brow, half concealed by the curled locks of the wig? There is a calm surface here, but it hides many threats and dangers; it is like a gloomy, overcast sea, or, perhaps better, like a lake that may soon be set off by a blaze of artificial lights or lit up by a display of fireworks.

THE grown man, of whom such great things are hoped, presents a determined and non-committal appearance to those who would divine his future.

One would say that the more proficient he grew in his royal calling, the more seriously did he come to regard his duties and responsibilities. Doubtless contemporary artists, influenced by the glorious dreams of the nation, continued to depict him as the Sun God or Apollo. But the man who collaborated with Colbert and Le Tellier, the executive who put in more than eight hours a day at his job, was quite a different person. The lower part of his face is fuller and more massive; in a way it is reminiscent of the Roman portrait busts. The eyes, formerly only half open, have become so large and prominent that they recall the Olympian eyes of Goethe; his thick lips have a tendency to sink inwards, due to his bad teeth. His

long, fox-like nose is even more slender than before. In this powerful head brute strength and cunning predominate. At times, as in the well-known engraving by Nanteuil, his expression is one of deep meditation, touched with sadness. At other times, as in the portrait done from life by Vaillant, his pleasant smile and the soft, amused expression of his eyes give him the air of a lively, jovial youngster. The bust by Warin—which is at the foot of the Queen's staircase, at Versailles—pictures him as a husky lad, half trooper, half butcher's assistant; only the stately wig and imposing breastplate keep him from seeming distinctly vulgar. This is the lover of Montespan, inordinately given over to physical passion and to his craze for horses, swept away by the thrilling confusion of military camps and reviews.

For this period, we possess an extraordinarily dramatic document, one that gives us great insight into his character. It is an anonymous canvas painted for the Gobelins works, which, with several others, was unearthed at the Château of Versailles two or three years ago when they were preparing for the historical exhibit. It represents Louis XIV on horseback in field uniform. He is wearing his hat, while behind him is Condé, also on horseback, but with bared head. There is something startling in the contrast between the two. The King seems composed and self-contained, his gestures are carefully considered; there is an almost death-like pallor on his face; his expression is harsh and determined, as if it were only by an effort of will that he avoids betraying the violent struggle that is taking place within him. Behind this composed, forceful, threatening man appears the almost servile

face of Condé, who is questioning a common soldier—some scout, doubtless. The Lion has been tamed by the Fox.

The King is now fully mature. At forty he has reached the height of his development. He is on the threshold of those cruel operations that are to destroy his robust constitution as well as his manly beauty. But already he is victim of nervous disorders. He suffers constantly from toothache, and from insomnia or, rather, nightmares. He has become so disturbed by affairs of state that he talks aloud and waves his arms in his sleep. Nevertheless, most of his contemporaries agree that at no other time in his life did he appear so regal, so unruffled, so even tempered.

For this period the most accurate likeness—accurate in that it is true to essential characteristics—the likeness that best coincides with the conception of him by intelligent Frenchmen and foreigners who were able to understand the grandeur of his projects, the great genius of his political policies, the richness, the universal quality of his gifts—is undoubtedly the admirable portrait by Coysevox, which is at present on the mantelpiece in the Œil-de-Bœuf. It is astonishing and mortifying that such a priceless masterpiece should even now be practically unknown, that it should not be appreciated and admired as it deserves to be. Indeed, it was not until MM. Pierre de Nolhac and André Pératé, directors of the Versailles Museum, discovered it among a lot of odds and ends in a dark closet that it was known at all. Even now it is not suitably exhibited in that dark antechamber, the Œil-de-Bœuf. Doubtless the best place for it would be either in the Salon de la Guerre or the Salon de la Paix, where

one could see it in the marvellous perspective afforded by the Galerie des Glaces.

This extraordinary work is dated 1681—the triumphal period of his reign. Louis XIV was then forty-three years old. He is pictured in all his Olympian majesty and manly beauty. He is to be sure a trifle fleshy, but his forehead is broad and radiant, and his whole face is transfigured by the quick, forceful, piercing mind that animates it. I know of no more complete plastic expression of the conception of Royalty as the perpetual irradiation of power, intelligence, beauty, and kindness. I cannot account for the shocking disregard of people to-day for this matchless work of art, or for their lack of interest in the King himself. It is mortifying to see drawing-rooms littered up with the tedious eighteenth century busts of Marie Antoinette, Madame de Pompadour, and Madame du Barry, while this masterpiece is ignored.

Lastly we see him in old age. Physical and moral decadence have set in; he has become accustomed to reverses and disasters, and submits to them as he does to the gradual approach of death. But he holds his head high; never will he admit defeat. When his portrait is painted, it is always as a soldier, or rather, as commander-in-chief; he wears a breastplate and military cape; in his hand is the commander's baton. But his toothless mouth is withered; on each side of his smooth chin the skin hangs down in flabby folds. In outline his face is astonishingly like that of Louis Philippe. It would even appear that this man, heretofore so slender and lithe, has become stout.

One of the drawings shown at the historical exhibition referred to above depicts him as he probably appeared

during these last years; it is done with an honesty that is scarcely tempered by the usual official flattery. The subject is the marriage of the Duc de Bourgogne. The venerable grandfather of the bridegroom is seen in the foreground; his face is so flushed that he might be taken for a country squire or a Norman farmer. His costume is covered with lace and gold braid, and sparkling with diamonds. Heavy eating has obviously taken its toll; he looks a little stupid; his face is somewhat apoplectic. Daily rides, walks in the open air and constant hunting have left his complexion almost crimson. Beside him, in full court regalia, is Madame, who is certainly the most regal looking person in the assembly. Puffed up with the haughtiness of a German princess, dignified from the top of her head to the hem of her embroidered dress, she looks out over the people around her as if they were so many wisps of smoke.

At first glance how different this rather rustic Louis XIV seems from the majestic monarch in regal mantle depicted by Rigaud at about this time! He is, however, the same man—there are the same flabby cheeks, the same withered mouth, and stout body that one imagines rather than sees beneath the folds of the heavy, embroidered cloak, the same high coloring of the huntsman, slightly toned down in this instance by the flattering brush of the artist. Yet there is something about this portrait, done as it is in the grand manner, that is not to be found in the snapshot described above. The King is trying to appear pleasant, even to smile, but the heavy lines of lips and nose, the dull, almost mournful stare of the eyes, bespeak the trials and bitterness of a long life and a long reign. He is the picture of disillusionment. But despite every-

thing, the King of France will stand his ground to the bitter end. In the face of sorrows and defeat, he will keep up appearances. An old man, he stands with the erectness and poise of a youngster. With what a graceful and noble air he faces us, hand on hip and nimble leg poised as if about to swing into a dance. A King has no right to be sad. He must be the centre of gaiety, the master of pleasure, of games and laughter.

He is more likable in the intimate and rather touching picture which I would leave with the reader. It is the old King who still withstands the combined forces of all Europe, the aged husband of Madame de Maintenon whom Antoine Benoist has depicted in pitiless wax—unshaven, with pale, colorless face, livid lips, and misty eyes; his bungling surgeons have bled him until there is hardly a drop of blood in his veins, but his head is still erect, his expression haughty. He suffers so from the gout that he cannot walk without cane or crutches; his feet misshapen from pain are concealed in cloth slippers; he can no longer ride, and is driven about like an invalid in a little carriage. Such, too, is the impression one gets of him from a little-known canvas that hangs in the entrance to Napoleon's apartments at Fontainebleau. But what dignity, what forceful will still persist in this living wreck! Sunk back in the low seat of a four-horse barouche, with a red canopy above him and a plumed hat on his head, the regal old man proudly displays the blue ribbon and star of the Order of the Holy Ghost. He is driving, and grasps the scarlet leather reins with hands encased in white gloves. In front is a little seat, also upholstered in red, for the young coachman who drives when the King is too afflicted with the gout to take the reins himself. Seated on

the lead horse is a fifteen-year-old outrider. And thus they drive through the silence of the shadowed parks at Fontainebleau or Marly, inhaling the refreshing odors of the woods and forgetting as best they can bombardments and battles and all the distressing events that are taking place about them.

How far we are from the Apollo, from the Sun God of earlier days, urging on his galloping steeds, with the gates of dawn swung wide before him! But once again, what nobility there is in this old man in white gloves, with what pride and dignity he looks out from beneath the canopy of his little carriage! It is a perfect symbol for the end of this reign. France may be ailing, but the King still holds the reins.

CHAPTER II

WHOSE PARENTS NEVER SMILED ON HIM

ACCORDING to the reports of some of his contemporaries, the son of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria was a grave, sedate, even somewhat austere prince—an astonishing characterization in the light of the calumnies of pamphleteers and the denunciations of historians of the last century who picture the life of Louis XIV as one unending debauch. Legend has him continuously in the arms either of a La Vallière or a Montespan, yet he was actually one of the most steady and earnest of men. Moreover, he was gracious, obliging, dignified, exquisitely polite, and blessed with a perfect ease of manner. Perhaps the only grace he lacked was that of a winning smile. That, to a large extent, was a result of his early upbringing. Never did smiling faces or friendly eyes look upon his cradle. His early years were sad and forlorn. He is like the unfortunate child mentioned by Virgil whose parents never had a smile for him.

His father and mother hated each other, or, if not that, they were antagonistic and lived apart. It is a frightful experience for a young child to come into immediate con-

tact with hatred in his own home, with a hatred so much stronger than the forces of his own puny life; it is frightful to be thrown at birth into an atmosphere of wrangling and discord, to be a helpless bird tossed and buffeted by storms. When on September 5, 1638, after twenty-two years of sterile married life, his mother gave birth to this first child, the nation cried out in wonder. For the royal couple to become sufficiently reconciled to pave the way for his birth it had been necessary to go through a full-fledged conspiracy and to call in the aid of nuns, monks, the confessor, and the intimate friend of the King. At last he was born! A miracle had been performed; God had smiled upon the House of France. That is why they called him Louis the Godgiven. Afterwards, out of gratitude, Anne of Austria caused the beautiful church of Val de Grace to be erected. Covered with garlands and *fleurs de lys,* with glistening urns, lofty statues, its white and mauve dome gilded by the rising sun—"the orient dome of sombre Val de Grace," as Victor Hugo described it—this inscription was placed over the doorway: JESU NASCENTI VIRGINIQUE MATRI, *to the infant Jesus and the Virgin Mother.* To the queen's contemporaries this pious inscription seemed an abominable piece of irony.

At any rate his father, sick and already dying, scarcely looked at the new-born babe. We are assured, however, that he was flattered to have an heir, and that he showed real joy at the event. It may be that this paternal pride was poisoned by certain suspicions that were insulting to Anne of Austria. Some time before his death, when his son was brought to his bedside, he said to the little boy:

"What's your name?"

"Louis XIV," was the sturdy reply of the young God-given, doubtless prompted by his attendants.

"Not yet," sighed the dying King as he turned bitterly away.

Was Louis XIII really the father of this child? There has been some attempt to deny that he was, and to make his birth one of the enigmas of history. During the life of Anne of Austria certain names were whispered, pamphlets circulated. That went on through the reign of Louis XIV. At Cologne that enemy of France, Pierre Marteau, put out a thin booklet entitled: "The love affair between Anne of Austria and Monsieur le C.D.R. [Count de la Rivière], the actual father of Louis XIV, the present King of France; in which it is seen what steps were taken to provide an heir to the throne," etc. But this is an insipid bit of fiction, a collection of calumnies each line of which exudes its falsehood. Mazarin, who has often been suspected, cannot be implicated. He had been in Rome for two years previous to the birth of Louis the Godgiven. However that may be, anyone who will carefully compare the portraits of father and son must be convinced that Louis XIV looks at least as much like his father as his mother. In matters of morality and in a thousand other ways there seem to be obvious signs of heredity.

As for the mother, there is abundant proof that she was overjoyed to have a child at last. But that is easy to understand. First of all, the King could no longer put her aside on the ground that she was barren, as he had threatened to do. Also when the King died she could not be sent back ignobly to Spain. But what tears, what tribulation, what entreaties to Heaven, what vows, what pil-

grimages had not this child "obtained by prayer" cost her! The Queen had knelt and prayed for deliverance from her barrenness before the altars of all the Notre Dames in France; from Notre Dame in Paris to Notre Dame in Liesse and Notre Dame in Chartres. When finally she became pregnant she had still in mind a frightful scene which had taken place the year before on Assumption Day in the Val de Grace convent. Richelieu had accused her of betraying France to her brother, the King of Spain, and Anne of Austria had been treated as guilty and cross-examined, as were also the nuns who were supposed to be her accomplices. Chancellor Séguier, they say, even dared search her as one would a spy. And then, two days after she had given birth to the child came the news of a defeat of the French army. Condé had been beaten and forced to raise the siege of Fontarabie. Two years before had occurred the taking of Corbie by the Spaniards, the march upon Paris of the troops of the Cardinal-Infanta and the subsequent terrorization of the capital. It is easy to imagine that a Queen who was a Spaniard, who was suspected, no doubt deservedly, of being in league with the enemy, would not be in a very cheerful frame of mind in such circumstances.

And then, finally, four years later Louis XIII followed his Prime Minister to the grave. This woman, at last rid of her two enemies and her two most formidable guardians, became the Regent and absolute ruler of the kingdom. She began to make up for the long period when she had been forced to restrain her emotions. "She possessed," says Cardinal Retz, "to the highest degree the coquetry that is common to those of her race." She had, above all, a long restrained hunger for love. This queen

who had heretofore led an almost cloistered life, became a frantic devotee of love. It is established beyond doubt that she was passionately fond of Mazarin. The handsome Italian, formerly an officer in the army, had become a diplomat and a Prince of the Church; in his will her husband had bequeathed him to her as Prime Minister. Theirs was the furious love of middle age, all the more ardent because it was clandestine. For it must be said on behalf of the two lovers that in all their relations their discretion was perfect and they were careful not to outrage the conventions of the day. Were it not for the ever-watchful gossips no one would have suspected anything. In Mazarin the Queen found not only a lover who had sworn and proven his faithfulness to her, but also a protector for her son, a man who would and could defend the throne and, should occasion arise, their lives. When we think of the many dangers which surrounded this widow and her two children, can we blame her for having turned confidently to this devoted and loving soul and for accepting his aid at this critical time? I repeat, she loved this handsome foreigner with all her heart. Her numerous letters bear witness to the fact. Did she love him more than her son? Alas, it seems likely. She wanted him forever at her side. She had made him take up his residence near her at the Palais Royal. When he was away she overwhelmed him with letters. When not writing, she would hasten to various churches and convents and would go on retreats at her beloved Val de Grace for, like most Spaniards, she had no compunctions about mixing her love affairs and her devotions. She dressed carefully and paid great attention to her beautiful hands, of which she was extraordinarily proud. Better to set

off her hands, she would wear gloves scented with exquisite perfumes; these and the Portuguese oranges she so loved the Cardinal would import especially for her from Spain. When conditions became more prosperous and the royal larder was more fully equipped, she used to give little dinners for her ladies-in-waiting at which she showed herself to be something of a gourmand. This taste for good food, combined with her indolence, soon made her stout. At the time of the Fronde the insolent Cardinal Retz tells us that she had the air of "a fat Swiss woman." Her features were flabby, her complexion mottled. But she still had pretty hands—hands, we are told by Madame de Motteville, "that were made to delight the eyes, to hold a sceptre, and to be admired." If one wished to gain her favor, one had but to feign enthusiasm for her hands.

Louis the Godgiven and his brother, younger than he by two years, grew up without much attention from this vain and passionate mother. Philip was the more delicate looking and the weaker of the two. Louis was far more robust. An anonymous commentator in the "Mémoires de Brienne", which was published in Amsterdam in 1720 by Frederic Bernard, recounts the following singular anecdote: "Like Hercules, he was born with his teeth fully developed. This phenomenon gave rise to much discussion, as is witnessed by a letter which the famous Grotius, then in France, wrote to his masters on this subject . . ." This is probably a legend made up afterwards to explain not only the appetite of this heavy eater, but even more his mania for conquest. Pamphleteers in those days pictured him as an ogre devouring his neighbors. At any rate we know that these precocious teeth were very bad.

But at least they were developed enough to allow him to bite the breasts of his nurses. Like the young Gargantua, Louis XIV consumed his nurses. He required almost a dozen of them. Nothing could be more natural than that his temperament should be in accord with his excellent appetite. This same commentator on de Brienne adds: "Louis XIV seems early in life to have given evidence of his affection for women. We have it on good authority that Anne of Austria had the Prince's horoscope read when he was not more than four or five years old. The astrologer, after expressing a desire to see Louis XIV naked, predicted the Prince's amorous tendencies, applying the following verse to him: *Mars ad opus Veneris, Martis ad arma Venus,* Mars for the work of Venus and Venus for the weapons of Mars."

This hero-to-be, though he bore the outward marks of heroism, remained for a long time in a sort of intellectual torpor. He had none of the vivacity of his brother Philip, whose combined petulance and winning ways were the joy of his mother and of her ladies-in-waiting. They idolized little Monsieur, as they called him, but the Dauphin's sleepy air alienated them and they predicted no brilliant future for him. Primi Visconti says as much without mincing his words: "During the King's childhood, *the French looked upon him as an idiot,* and, as they think well only of vivacious children, they were convinced that Monsieur would be the more successful of the two." This is a mistake that parents and teachers almost always make. They are poor judges. They confuse intelligence with a gift for mimicry or quick assimilation, with slyness, or with superficial cleverness. Their brilliant scholars as a rule wither early. These sprinters who are off so

early in the morning collapse on the first lap. The others, the real masters, the rightful sons of Kings, take longer to attain their full growth. As with the higher animals, their period of gestation is longer. Ordinary people are constantly mistaken about them. They are never able to predict what brow is to wear the crown. Flaubert once said that great works of art, like great landscapes and the great works of nature, seem somewhat dull at first sight. It is a penetrating observation.

When Louis was eight or nine years old he began to shake himself out of this torpor. Among the family possessions of His Grace, the Duke of Vendôme, is a portrait of Louis XIV at this age. He is a charming child, obviously of fine stock—certainly there is nothing of the "idiot" in him. His large eyes are soft and caressing, he has a frank smile and looks like an engaging youngster who is as well mannered as he is aristocratic and genteel. In this portrait one is especially struck by his sensitive and affectionate expression. When his father was at death's door, according to his valet, Dubois, an officer of the guard asked him:

"Sir, if God sees fit to remove your good papa, the King, would you wish to be King and reign in his place?"

At once the child began to cry and answered:

"No! I don't wish to be, I don't want my good papa to die. Because if he should die I would throw myself into the moat."

These are the words of a cowed child whose nurses have taught him what to say. Nevertheless his gentleness is a subject which his contemporaries never tired of discussing. When he was preparing for his first communion Father Paulin, his confessor, wrote to the head of the Jesuit

PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV

By G. Edelinck

order in Rome: "In all the world there is no more gentle or more pliant lamb than our King." Even Madame de Motteville, who never lost any love for him, was forced to admire his gentleness, his patience, his sweetness when, at the age of nine, he was stricken with the small-pox. "He spoke gently to those who attended him and said amusing and kindly things to them; he submitted willingly to all that the doctors ordered." Never haughty, never taking advantage of his rank. Like most children who have been denied sympathy by their parents, he bestowed his affection upon servants. He kissed La Porte, his valet. "When he wished to go to sleep," writes the latter, "*he would ask me to put my head on his pillow next to his.* And if he awoke during the night he would get up and come over and sleep with me. Consequently, I would often carry him back asleep to his own bed. . . ."

This freedom from arrogance on his part went so far that alarm was felt about it, especially in quarters hostile to the Cardinal. They claimed that the latter was purposely taming him. At any rate, they agreed that the King was too humble, too submissive, too well-behaved a child; that he lacked the qualities fitting in a person of his rank. Later he himself told Madame de Maintenon that in his childhood his only companions had been the servants of the Queen's chamber maids "who refused to show him respect." It is doubtless in memory of this humiliation that when he became king he made a practice of never passing the least important of his maid servants without lifting his hat. Madame de Maintenon adds: "His usual companion was the granddaughter of a chambermaid of one of the Queen's chambermaids. He called her 'Queen Marie' because they often played together à

la Madame. She would always take the part of the Queen while he, as page or footman, would carry her train, wheel her about in a chair, or carry a torch before her." La Porte, who hated the Cardinal, considered that they were abusing the King's good nature and cultivating a humility in him unworthy of a person of his station in life. Perceiving that in these games the King always played the role of valet, he resolved to give him a lesson. To shame his young master, he settled down in an arm chair, keeping his hat on before him. The child complained immediately to the Queen. At which La Porte replied:

"As the King is performing my task, it is only proper that I should perform his."

What a strange picture! This boy who is destined to make Europe tremble, who will soon be such a master as none of them have ever seen, complacently lets himself be treated as an inferior. This arrogant person receiving lessons in dignity and in the bearing proper for a king from his valet!

This episode is not an instance of childish caprice; it is not the act of a young lord who is amused by humbling himself for the moment. Essentially Louis was timid; he was also tender hearted, afraid of hurting the feelings of others and of asserting himself at the expense of someone else. The faithful valet, La Porte, recounts a significant anecdote on this point: "One day at Compiègne, as the Prince was passing through the King's apartments on his way to see His Eminence, the King arose to receive him. For some time they stood together before the fire, the King *keeping his hat off all the time*. . . . I went up to his tutor and remarked that the King should put his hat

on, but received no reply. I said the same thing to the assistant governor who also lacked courage to say anything. I finally approached His Majesty and whispered to him to put his hat on. When the Prince noticed this, he added:

" 'Sire, La Porte is right. Your Majesty should put his hat on. Your Majesty has done us enough honor in merely greeting us.' "

It is the same child who, four days after the death of his father, when he first assumed his throne in the presence of Parlement, saw Omer Talon, the Advocate-General, kneeling in his red robe, and heard him declare: "Sire, the seat occupied by Your Majesty stands in our eyes as a symbol of the throne of the living God. All classes in the kingdom honor and respect you as a visible divinity." The little King was not at all convinced of the truth of these pretty words and, like a well brought up child, he was afraid to put his hat on before all these imposing people.

La Porte's hatred of the Cardinal doubtless makes him exaggerate the submissiveness of his master. Real or imaginary, this submission always aroused his indignation. He attempted to prejudice the child against his godfather. We can be practically sure that it was he who prompted the little boy in the following story, which he recounts: "One day at Compiègne as the Cardinal with an imposing retinue passed by, the King remarked: 'There goes the Grand Turk!' The Queen endeavored to discover who had taught him that. The King would not tell. One minute he would say it was a red haired man, the next that it was a man with blond hair. . . ." He was lying in

order not to betray his friends—unreliable friends at that, in whose hands he was but a toy.

At Court there was a whole party that attempted to turn him against the Cardinal and to instil a horror of Prime Ministers in him, especially of ecclesiastical Prime Ministers. Richelieu, though dead, was still hated as the protector and, as it were, the inventor of Mazarin. Once when they were at Chaillot, Madame de Sénecey, the governess of the young King, saw a portrait of Richelieu and exclaimed: "Look at him, the dog!"

This caused the King to say: "Give me a cross-bow and I'll shoot him!"

Louis XIV's aversion to Cardinal-Prime Ministers undoubtedly dated from his early youth. It lasted all through his life. Later when some important question was being discussed in Council, the King remarked jokingly: "Watch Colbert. He is about to repeat, 'Sire, the great Cardinal Richelieu . . .' "

Mazarin was informed of all this by his spies. He was obliged to have his pupil watched continually. Had he but known, he would have realized that he had nothing to fear. No one would ever gain a controlling influence over this child, predestined to command. No one would ever lay hand on him. With the subtlety of instinct shown by those who are destined to rule, he felt himself to be surrounded by enemies and inferiors. He was waiting to become stronger before showing his hand. Until that time arrived he kept quiet and held his peace. He had already achieved that hereditary ability to hide his feelings and thoughts, that profitable and necessary gift of dissembling which is one of the greatest qualities in a king.

THAT is why to his mother and to her lover, as to the courtiers, Louis seemed to be a dunce without future, a most ordinary infant undergoing the experiences usual in a child of his age.

He was passionately fond of playing soldier. One might say that this son of France was born with a natural taste for all that was military. Moreover from the cradle everything was done to encourage this tendency in him. He was still wearing bibs when they recruited a company of children-in-waiting for him from among his playmates. Among others, there were the two sons of Count de Brienne and young Vivonne, son of the Duke of Mortemart. This company was mustered in military formation under the command of Madame de Lasalle, a lady-in-waiting upon the Queen, who, as general in command, had been given a uniform of a sort. She wore a high military collar, a hat with black plumes, and carried a sword at her side. Thus fitted out, she drilled the company of children who were armed with pikes and marched to the sound of a drum. A few years later a miniature fort was constructed in the garden of the Palais Royal for the diversion of the Dauphin and his brother. Several times the future hero of sieges grew so excited over the siege of this tiny citadel that he made himself seriously ill. He also liked to shoot, to ride, and to drive. Moreover he was fond of the country, where there was plenty of room for vigorous sports of all sorts. He was never happier than at Saint Germain, Compiègne, or Fontainebleau. That is characteristic of him. Throughout his life Louis XIV was always to love the country. He was never really happy when not there. So strong was this inclination that, later, coxcombs at Versailles would

whisper behind his back, "He's nothing but a country gentleman."

The Court usually spent the summer at Fontainebleau. There one could play in the forest and bathe in the Seine. Madame de Motteville has passed on the following sketch of the family baths: "The King, still a child, would also bathe, and with him his tutor, Marshal de Villeroy, who stayed at his side. The Queen and all those who were privileged to accompany her would usually wear long shirts of grey linen that came down to their feet. The King's tutor was similarly clad, and modesty was in no way offended." Picture the scene! Marshal de Villeroy and his pupil in grey linen shirts, splashing modestly in the Seine accompanied by the Queen and her maids of honor, similarly enveloped in grey! It is indeed a picture of old France.

The taste of the Dauphin for physical exercise augured well for his future bravery. But his high spirits and his impetuous temperament concealed grave failings which, it is true, he eventually overcame, but only by dint of great effort and the constant exercise of will power.

Naturally calm and gentle, he was never exactly an irascible child, but when pushed beyond reason he would become furiously angry and give way to bursts of rage that left him panting and exhausted. La Porte gives an amusing example of this which I cannot resist telling, although I apologize in advance to the demands of modern prudery. It happened during the Fronde, in 1652, when the King was not yet fourteen years old. "From Montereau," says the valet, "we went to Corbeil, where the King

PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV

By Justus d'Egmont, after a contemporary engraving

PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV

By Pelerin, after a contemporary engraving

requested Monsieur to sleep in his bedroom, which was so small that there was room for but one person to move in it at a time. When they awoke in the morning the King, without thinking, spat on Monsieur's bed; the latter spat back purposely on the King's bed. The King, somewhat angry, spat in his face, whereupon Monsieur jumped up on the King's bed and urinated on it. The latter did the same on his brother's bed. Having now done all they possibly could, they began to pull the covers off each other and then, little by little, started to fight. During the fracas I did what I could to restrain the King. Not succeeding, I called Monsieur de Villeroy, who put an end to the affair. Monsieur had become angry more quickly than the King, but it was much more difficult to appease the King than Monsieur." He was slow to become aroused, obstinate, perseverant, the very characteristics that we shall meet later in the mature man. He went at everything seriously, even his games. He went into them whole-heartedly and got all possible pleasure out of them. It was impossible to stop him. One day when he was turning somersaults on his bed he fell to the floor, striking his head so heavily, that he narrowly escaped fracturing his skull. Another time, in the garden of the Palais Royal he became so excited attacking the fortress that he was drenched with sweat. At that moment someone came to tell him that the Queen was about to bathe. "He ran," records the faithful La Porte, "as fast as he could in order to go with her. He ordered me to undress him, but I did not wish to do so. Consequently he reported the fact to the Queen, who was afraid to oppose him." But the valet, seeing his condition, was obdurate. The King insisted. A doctor had to be called in before

the child could be restrained from throwing himself into the water, hot as he was.

These obstinate whims of his are forerunners of his unyielding will. This little Dauphin, usually so well behaved, had his disobedient moments. At such times it was very difficult to handle him, and it was sometimes necessary to have recourse to the whip. But as he was usually very gentle and obedient, he was seldom whipped. However, once when he had accompanied the Queen to Amiens, he created a terrible scene over a ribbon which held a little cross made of religious relics about his neck. It finally got to the point where the Queen, flushed with anger, cried out:

"I'll show you that you have no power and that I have. It is a long time since you were whipped, and I'll show you that it is as easy to spank you in Amiens as in Paris."

With him, such violent and humiliating methods were useless. They should never have had recourse to them with as rational and as proud a boy as he. "*He always fell back on reason,*" says La Porte, who observed him all through his childhood. To fall back on reason—an admirable quality in a future King of France! We shall see it increase and grow strong in the years to come.

This reasonable, earnest child was neither sullen nor melancholy. If he was not as vivacious as his brother Philip, he was none the less prepossessing and interesting to look at. The people of Paris were astonished and proud of him when he traversed the streets of the capital on horseback. At this time he had a very light complexion, he was almost as blond as an Austrian, a radiant fairness that might well suggest the Sun-King. He wore a coat embroidered in gold and silver, a hat decorated with white

plumes, and rode a white horse whose mane was braided with flaming red ribbon. During Holy Week in 1647 he accompanied his godfather, the Cardinal, who assisted at the Tenebræ at the Carmelite Church on the Faubourg Saint Jacques. Through the latticed grill before the altar the populace could see him running about the choir, blowing out candles and—adds Madame de Motteville who gives us this sketch—"behaving in general like a child who is having a good time at his game."

What an intriguing picture, this royal butterfly darting amidst the flames of the candles which shimmered on the rich gold of his dress! Before the period of his apotheosis, it is pleasant to glance for a moment at this youthful silhouette; before casting our eyes on Louis the Great, to catch a glimpse of him whom the good citizens of Paris thought of as "the little Louis."

ALTHOUGH playful, he was none the less a thoughtful child. Those who knew him well were confident of his future.

The somewhat ostentatious elegance of the Court did not dazzle him. He either saw or guessed what lay beneath it all. How could he help being struck and mortified by the penury, by the gilded miserliness of the avaricious Cardinal, and by the hardships inflicted upon his mother? At the Louvre and the Palais Royal there was not always enough to eat. A good, rich omelet was looked upon as a gift from heaven. During Lent they subsisted upon thin stew; the maids of honor had to be satisfied with what remained if indeed the Queen left anything. The King and his brother slept in worn-out sheets; the upholstery of their carriages was in tatters. All these

things made a painful impression on this child who had an innate feeling for pomp and grandeur. But worst of all for him was the feeling that his mother belonged to someone else. Of course he did not yet suspect the exact nature of her relations with the Cardinal. However, one soon finds out everything at Court. There were so many people to whose interest it was to stir up trouble between mother and son and to arouse the latter against the favorite! But even if no one said anything to make him suspicious, he still could not help realizing with gloomy jealousy that his mother loved someone else. At the bottom of his heart was always the realization of this, the cruellest of all disillusionments for a child. He said nothing, taking refuge in that taciturnity which frivolous courtiers mistook for sluggish dull-wittedness.

One who observed him closely would have discerned that there was something strangely enigmatic in the attitude of this child. What a curiously silent youth this is who does not wish to talk but whose mind is ceaselessly active, who asks questions when at his ease, who is curious about everything and wants to know all that goes on, who suddenly becomes gay, laughs and pokes fun at people, is quick to seize upon the ridiculous and loves to joke. La Porte, the faithful servant, has noted all this. But there is an almost impenetrable mystery at the bottom of this childish heart—a mystery that will continue all through his adolescence and on into his early manhood. One can attempt to throw some light on it, but one can only work from more or less probable hypotheses. He knows everything, or at least guesses it, but nevertheless he still loves his mother. He has a curious love for her, in which are mingled admiration and respect. The death of this

heavy, indolent, sensual woman was perhaps the greatest sorrow of his life. But never does he give any outward sign of this fervor or of the manner in which his sensitive feelings are hurt. He holds his tongue, does not wish to see what is happening; it is as if he were not present. In this unusual attitude of his, we can see at the most merely the sulkiness of a very self-contained child who already takes everything to heart and suffers because he feels his mother slipping away from him and knows that she doesn't really belong to him.

The Queen was too wrapped up in her lover to pay much attention to the subtleties of a child's psychology. Moreover, she was never especially perceptive. But that did not prevent her from caring for the Dauphin in her own impersonal and superficial way. She kept an eye upon the education and the health of this son, upon whom her whole position rested. As for the Cardinal, wrapped up in affairs—his own as well as those of the State—he paid scant attention to this young heir to the throne who seemed of such mediocre intelligence and who had proved so good-natured and easy to manage. However, he was too keen not to realize that in his heart the King did not like him—that he did not have an entire hold upon the royal child. Moreover, like everyone else, he was deceived by the apparent listlessness of the little Prince. Doubtless he reassured himself with the thought, "After all, what does it matter! He is so stupid."

CHAPTER III

UNDER THE ROD

NO one wished that the child should be stupid, the Cardinal as little as the Queen-mother. Too often, on Saint Simon's authority, has it been asserted that his education and instruction were purposely neglected. M. Lacour-Gayet has disposed of that old delusion in his excellent book, "L'Education Politique de Louis XIV." All that the Cardinal was really afraid of was that the King's education might be made a pretext for instilling into him a hatred of his Prime Minister. For that reason he kept jealous watch over the confidants and teachers of his future master, and, when possible, surrounded him with his own relatives or with those whom he knew to be faithful to him. But despite all that, he realized quite as much as the Queen, the necessity of arousing this apparently dull and listless child. The teachers whom he appointed felt this necessity even more strongly than he, and they did all they could to awaken in the King a realization of his dignity, of his obligations, and of his responsibilities. Most important of all were the demands of the nation, still glorying in its first triumphs over Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. The nation kept its eyes

on the Dauphin, and demanded a prince worthy of his throne and of its new ambitions.

Therefore as soon as the little Louis XIV was old enough to be given over to the care of teachers—toward the beginning of the year 1646—the Regent made public a letter addressed to the Duke of Montbazon in which the French were officially informed that the education of their King had begun, and that a "Superintendent of the education and training of the King" had been appointed; and that "her cousin, Cardinal Mazarin," had been entrusted with the performance of this duty. Besides His Majesty's tutor, Marshal de Villeroy, and his governess, the Marquise de Sénecey, they also organized a staff of teachers for the exclusive service of the little Prince. At the head of this group was the Abbé Hardouin de Beaumont de Péréfixe, at that time Bishop of Rodez and later Archbishop of Paris; under him was the Abbé de Brisacier, who at times took his place; and later Father Paulin, the head of the Jesuit order in Paris, who combined the duties of confessor to the King and assistant tutor. Besides these men, the King had a writing master, a teacher of mathematics, a teacher of foreign languages, a drawing instructor, a reader, an instructor on the lute and the guitar,—and, finally, a master of arms, a riding master, and a dancing master.

In what school in Paris could he have found better teachers or a more complete course of studies? It should be noted that Father Paulin, head of the Jesuits of the Rue Saint Antoine, was one of the "great Jesuits," as they were called. And at that time there were no educators in the world in any way comparable with the Jesuits. The head tutor, Hardouin de Péréfixe, was certainly not a

second Bossuet, but he was an alert and intelligent man and a competent writer. To counterbalance the too-pious influence of these ecclesiastical masters, for a time they added La Mothe-Le Vayer, the sceptic, to the list of his teachers. He was an epicurean, a scholar, and a great lover of sixteenth century literature. Mazarin, who kept a close eye on the education of this royal child, doubtless appointed him purposely. Moreover, if one examines the curriculum mapped out for Louis XIV, one will discover that of the subjects that would today be included in a well-rounded education, none was left out except history. And at that time history was not taught in any school.

However Louis XIV—although later in life he deplored the fact that he was not taught at least the history of his predecessors—from earliest youth was given a slight knowledge of this subject. Hardouin de Péréfixe, his tutor, wrote his "Histoire du Roy Henry le Grand" for him, and discussed with him not only the life of that King, but all French history. He prepared, he tells us, "a summary for His Majesty *which was read to him every day, and which he enjoyed so thoroughly that it is hard to believe that it was not of profit to him.*" And before that, La Porte, the valet, with the permission of Anne of Austria, used to read from "L'Histoire de France" by de Mézeray, the foremost historian of those days, before the little King would go to sleep. La Porte gave his reading "the air of a story" so as not to repel the youngster. "I pointed out to him," he records, "the bad kings in order to arouse in him an aversion to vice, and the virtuous ones to inspire him to imitate them. *The Queen approved of my action.* The King liked it, and promised to follow in the

footsteps of the most noble of his ancestors, *and would fly into a rage if anyone predicted that he would be a second Louis Donothing.*"

La Porte adds the following sentence, which is worth noting because it contradicts the assertions of Saint-Simon and those who follow him: "*M. de Beaumont, His Majesty's tutor, took great pains with his lessons,* and I can testify that at all the lessons at which I was present he left out nothing that it was his duty to include." Let us believe this witness, rather than biassed slanderers.

THERE is a misunderstanding as to what things should be stressed in the education of a King. People are prone to think of the young Louis XIV as if he were an ordinary school boy. In this they are mistaken, as mistaken as if they were to judge the actions of a king by the same standards as those of an individual. There are systems of education and moral codes that pertain to kings alone. Modern teachers are solely, or at least primarily, interested in the quantity of material that a pupil absorbs. At heart they find fault with Louis XIV because he was neither pedant, intellectual, nor artist! Hardouin de Péréfixe puts the point very well in the "Discours au roi" with which he prefaces his "Histoire de Henry le Grand": "A King is almost entirely concerned with action." The most important consideration in the education of a king is that he learn to perform decisive actions. And to do so, he must first know exactly what is his position in life.

Naturally Louis XIV was not born with this knowledge. Under the old regime a King of France was a unique and complex being, different from and far above ordinary mortals. He was the product not merely of centuries of

heredity, but of a special training of the nature of which we now have only the most confused conception. He was perfection itself, or almost perfection; he was a masterpiece, wrought by heredity, education, will power, and intelligence. The training of one who was destined to fulfill such high functions must perforce be begun early. When very young Louis XIV seemed to have no conception of his station in life or of the career for which he must prepare. We have just seen what his friends thought of his habit of assuming the role of valet in his games. It was necessary methodically to impress upon his mind a sense of his rank and the privileges that went with it. His writing master made him copy over and over again the sentence: "Homage is due to Kings. Their will is law." They tried in every way to instil in him a sense of sovereign authority. This was especially the object of those schemers who hoped to make the young king a weapon to be used against the all-powerful Cardinal. But Louis the Godgiven pretended not to understand their aims.

To this consciousness of his personal authority, Hardouin de Péréfixe thought it proper to add instruction in what he called the "royal virtues," in other words, in a moral code; he left his protégé's political education to the Cardinal. Before undertaking his task, Péréfixe had written a work entitled "Institutio principis ad Ludovicum XIV Franciæ et Navarræ regem Christianissimum" in which he outlined a system of moral instruction for the Dauphin. It was a collection of Latin quotations applicable to his royal pupil. Every day Hardouin would make him translate such a passage as: "My subjects are so many children whom God has entrusted to my care. It is the duty of a father to increase the happiness of his

children, to guard their possessions, and to watch over their safety." Let no one think that the young student looked indifferently upon these noble precepts, or that he thought of them as platitudes. So deep was their impression on him that later we find them repeated almost word for word in his "Mémoires." When he wrote his "Réflexions sur le métier de Roi," he called it "a delightful profession," repeating, with different emphasis, what the good old Hardouin de Péréfixe had said to him twenty years before: "*A King should delight in his calling;* it is his business to reign, and to reign he himself must hold the helm of the Ship of State." We should note in passing that that unusual sentence of Louis XIV, "The profession of being a King is a majestic, noble, and *delightful* one," can only be understood when considered in connection with this passage from the book by the Bishop of Rodez.

To add zest to these abstract lessons, the teacher pictured for his pupil a perfect monarch, a man who by common consent combined all the royal virtues. This was Henri IV—an idealized Henri IV, reformed and rearranged to meet the needs of the moment, distorted to suit the desires and prejudices of the nation. It should be noted that all of Louis XIV's failings are to be found in this ancestor of his; that one can reproach him for exactly the same things for which his grandson has been reproached. But this fact is passed over in silence. Louis XIV is thought of only as the man who revoked the Edict of Nantes; yet even Henri IV would probably have been forced to revoke that Edict had he lived longer. But the revocation of the Edict by Louis condemns him. The same acts that are termed respectively mere peccadillos or strokes of genius in the grandfather are looked upon as

abominable vices or megalomania in his descendant. Once dead, the wily Henri—who was just as autocratic and as greedy for new conquests as Louis XIV—came to be looked upon as everyone's friend. Nothing added to his glory or helped build up the legend about him so much as his premature death.

In the name of this ideal monarch, Hardouin de Péréfixe impressed his pupil with the necessity of taking personal charge of the government; he instilled in him a horror of favorites—and also of mistresses, which is going a trifle too far—showed him the need of careful attention to finances, of impartial justice, and wise and measured valor. Some of these admonitions were not calculated to please the Cardinal; others were actually directed against him. Even so, the Cardinal did not interfere because they represented the unanimous desires of the nation, and also, perhaps, because he saw in them vague and essentially meaningless words. However, his enemies did not give up the struggle; they multiplied their schemes for obtaining possession of the young sovereign's mind. In 1651 when Mazarin was in exile at Brühl they lost no time making use of their opportunity. Madame de Lansac, the King's first governess and an enemy of the Cardinal, made the King a present of three letters which Catherine de Medici had written to her son, Henri III. These letters contained not merely a political programme, but a complete schedule of all the daily duties of a king. Catherine de Medici also recommended to her son that he assume personal and autocratic control of the government.

It seems that the king was at his studies when Madame de Lansac brought him the letters. We are assured that "he had his tutor read them to him at once, long as they

were," and that he listened "with close attention." Afterward he, the Bishop of Rodez, and Madame de Lansac discussed the instructions at length.

There is something deeply significant in that; in Louis XIV the master was slowly awakening. He welcomed advice from his equals, his predecessors, his relatives, from anyone of his own rank and profession. When Catherine de Medici or Henri IV spoke, he was all attention. He felt that theirs was solid, useful information. On the contrary, he was indifferent and nonchalant toward teachers and studies.

Once, according to La Porte, M. de Beaumont complained to His Eminence that the King was not applying himself to his studies. The Cardinal answered:

"Don't worry about that. He already knows too much. Every time he comes to meetings of the Council he asks me a hundred questions." Primi Visconti records that at this same time Count de Fuensaldagne, the Spanish ambassador, noted that there was "a certain air of maturity about the young King," and was the first to spread the news abroad.

Real statesmen did not take this pedagogic rubbish too seriously. Yet Louis XIV was no dunce; at times he even proved to be a rather good pupil. Some of the exercises that have been preserved are decidedly creditable. There has even been published, under his name, a French translation of the first book of Cæsar's "Commentaries." He studied Italian, Spanish, mathematics, music; learned enough drawing to be able to plot out a garden or to sketch a building, and could discuss artistic and scientific questions with specialists. Had he so wished, he might have become an excellent student, just as he might have been

the best dancer in the kingdom. But instinctively he knew that these were not his affairs. He would be neither a buffoon nor a pedant. Neither science nor literature are included among the occupations of a king. A king has quite different duties—he must become acquainted with every detail, every function of the complicated machine which he is to direct.

In that, as in science and in all other branches of learning, he received the best possible education, a practical one. He learned by experience and by conversation with experts. His teachers were men of outstanding ability who offered this young man greedy for knowledge and born for greatness the widest possible field for experiment. And incidentally, is it not amusing to hear the very people who extol the virtues of practical education, accuse Louis XIV of being ignorant—Louis XIV who was, in a way, the model and masterpiece of this type of education?

To this formal education must be added the influences of those about him, and of public opinion throughout France filtering into the young sovereign in devious ways.

A flood of pedagogic literature followed the birth of Louis XIV as was usual when a Dauphin was born. This Son of France was the child of the entire nation; various classes wished him reared according to their own tastes and ideas. Jesuits, Jansenists, Parlementarians, and Courtiers proffered advice. In most of these works the predominant note was a belligerent and aggressive nationalism. The recent victories of Condé over the Spanish, the annexation of Alsace, and the Treaty of Munster, had excited the ambitions of the French. However, throughout the seventeenth century in France from Henri IV to

the Treaty of Nimwegen, it is not difficult to trace the steady, almost uninterrupted growth of imperialism.

In 1641, while the Dauphin was still in skirts, there was dedicated to him a gorgeously illustrated and bound volume entitled, "Généalogie de la Maison de France." The first plate in it bore the inscription: *L'Europe Française.* It was a map of the various countries that might have been governed by members of the French royal family. Among them were: "France, Naples and Sicily, Portugal, Navarre, Poland, Jerusalem, the German Empire and Constantinople"—almost all of Europe and a good slice of Asia!

The implication was that the son of Louis XIII ought to reconquer the provinces now lost to the French Empire. To stir up the patriotic fervor necessary for such sweeping conquests, the anonymous author of "Les Codicilles de Louis XIII" (also composed primarily for the education of the Dauphin), demanded that each Sunday in the year be set aside for the commemoration of a national victory. Starting with the victory of Clovis over the Germans and the deliverance of Orleans by Joan of Arc, he carried the list down to such events as the Siege of La Rochelle, the conquest of Alsace and the capture of Thionville. Clovis, Joan of Arc, and Saint Louis were to be made national saints, as it were. The author of the "Codicilles" advanced the theory that Henri IV possessed all the royal virtues. He even went so far as to propose the inauguration of a national holiday on the first Sunday after Easter to commemorate the conversion of Clovis and his victory over the Germans. Louis XIV made his first communion on Christmas day and not, as was usual, at Easter, because Clovis had been baptized on Christmas

—Clovis who had conquered Germany before his conversion, as Hardouin de Péréfixe pointed out in his "Institutio principis": "Clodovæus, nondum christianus, vicit Alemaniam," "Clovis, not yet a Christian, conquered Germany." Thanks to the poem of Chapelain, the Maid of Orleans was very much in fashion. They sang her praises in verse and pictured her as a Roman heroine, a sort of Gallic Clœlia. At the Palais de Justice in Rouen they still preserve a seventeenth century canvas in which she appears in that guise. From this time on she tended to become a national saint.

How silly it is, therefore, to claim that at this time in France patriotism and even a kind of Chauvinism were unknown?

The clerical party sponsored a series of poems about Clovis and Saint Louis—"Saint Louis, or the Christian hero." Not only did they extol the ordinary Christian virtues for the young King's benefit, but they also urged him to resume the Crusades and to expel the Turks from Europe and from the Holy Land. With Germany and Spain exhausted, it was the duty of France to take up once more the struggle against the Infidels. With such suggestions was this twelve year old school boy besieged. Such was the advice of the general public to him. It is because they think of the French national aspirations of this age in terms of the period just after the treaty of Westphalia that historians have been so unfair to Louis XIV. One has only to compare the imperialistic dreams of the nation with the programme of conquests that this supposed firebrand actually worked out to realize that it was France that was arrogant and greedy for adventure and Louis XIV who was temperate and prudent.

It is undeniable, however, that at the period we are considering the King listened amiably to the exhortations of those who voiced this almost unanimous desire of the nation. But, as ever, he kept his own counsel. The superficial and ostentatious piety of his mother, however, did not tend to check his ambitions. The ceremonies of the Church combined with those at Court to instil in the little Prince a love of grandeur and to intoxicate him with the thought of his own power—he who had heard himself proclaimed "a visible divinity." The Queen took him with her to various churches and convents in Paris. Every Saturday she would hear mass at Notre Dame. She never missed a sermon or a feast day at the Grands Augustins, Val de Grace, or the Jesuit Church on the Rue Saint Antoine. Under her supervision the King made his first communion with great pomp in his own parish church, which, as he was living in the Palais Royal, was Saint Eustache.

On Corpus Christi in the year 1651, in the garden of the Palais Royal he solemnly received processions from every parish in Paris and, bareheaded, accompanied the Blessed Sacrament to the huge street altar which had been erected. For the little King who saw himself already idealized, almost idolized by an entire nation, this day seemed to presage his apotheosis. Never in his life did he forget that procession to the Palais Royal. It taught him the only lesson in humility than a man of his rank could learn, for in the moment of his exaltation he was made to recognize his own pettiness before the only thing that is really great.

While awaiting those glorious and triumphant days still to come, he must write a page in his copy book under the eye of a priest or a valet. "Homage is due to Kings.

Their will is law." The King copies it out conscientiously, thinking the while of the meagre dinners at the Louvre, of his torn sheets, his dilapidated carriages and his empty purse. Later he thumbs the dictionary as he composes a Latin theme. A tumult is heard outside the door of his room; there is no glass in the window panes; he shivers in the unheated rooms of the Château at Saint Germain. But at the bottom of his fathomless eyes is that imperialistic dream, so dear to his people. He keeps his own counsel. They take him for a pleasant, harmless boy without much sense. He laughs at them to himself. From this time on, he knows that he is a man of destiny. What his future will be he can not say; he is only sure that it will be illustrious. It little matters what form it takes. They think they are preparing him in advance. He listens submissively to his instructors. Even if he is not a brilliant pupil, he is well balanced and thoughtful. He is never rebellious, or a romantic hero like Napoleon. He recites his lessons to M. de Beaumont or to Father Paulin. He never says: "Let me alone! I know what I need better than you do." He is too obedient for anything of that sort. Moreover he profits by everything, he gains knowledge on all sides. He is in no hurry; all life is before him. But his eyes sometimes glitter with a dream of power; the gleam, however, disappears as soon as it is noticed. This child with firm mouth and fox-like nose is sure of himself; he is sure that his heart, that good heart inherited from his mother, will not fail him.

PART TWO

TRUMPETS OF LOVE AND GLORY

"He had in him the stuff for four kings and an honest man."—"Mémoirs" of the Maréchal de Gramont.

CHAPTER I

THE TASK BEFORE HIM

IT CANNOT be said of him that he had only to be born to receive a crown and an empire. He was not the favored son whose path through life had been smoothed for him. This orphan, heir to a great royal family, was almost submerged at once in the wreck of monarchy. From the first, things went against him; it was only after a long struggle that he triumphed.

First of all, as will be remembered, his birth was in a sense a miracle; both heaven and the laws of nature had seemed to oppose it. His childhood and youth were filled with various annoying incidents. He was born in the midst of a war against Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, a war which was eventually crowned with important victories but had not been won. Soon after came the civil war which was like a revolution accomplished in the face of the enemy. It encouraged the Spanish to begin intriguing again to bring about a disintegration of France. The monarchy was on the verge of destruction. The little Dauphin, driven out of his capital, was forced, as it were, to reconquer his kingdom, province by province. Were it not for the presence of mind and skill of Turenne, who restored his fortunes at the battle of Bléneau, he

would have been another King of Bourges. That was the most critical of moments for the cause of French unity, not yet an accomplished fact. Yet, that unity, such as it was, had for two centuries been admired by foreigners. Machiavelli thought that centralization of power in the King was the principal reason for the greatness of France. It was still in a precarious state at the time of the Fronde. Not long before the insurgent peasants in Burgundy (during the revolt of the Lanturelus) had burned the King's portrait amid cries of, "Vive l'Empereur!" German agents had spread a great deal of propaganda and the peasants decided that it was to their advantage to join the Empire. On the southern border, Spain had always toyed with the idea of creating a Republic of Aquitaine at Bordeaux and a Republic of Provence at Marseilles. And England was fostering the idea of a Republic of Normandy, with Havre or Rouen as capital and a Huguenot state in Saintonge, with La Rochelle as capital and principal seaport.

Facts such as these remind us of an axiom of history which should never be forgotten: When the people of France have not actively opposed the creation of a French nation, all too often they have lent no assistance to those who were endeavoring to do so; France has become a nation despite the French. During the childhood of Louis XIV, France was saved by two people—a Spanish woman, Anne of Austria, and an Italian, Mazarin. The latter, it is true, had inherited the political policies of Richelieu.

Thus the apprenticeship of the Son of France was not made easy for him. From the first he was subjected to hardships, which left their mark upon him for life. In just what way did he react against them? Nothing is

more fascinating to study than the manner in which a domineering personality becomes crystallized.

Louis XIV soon learned that there were pitfalls on all sides of him. Such was the penalty of being a royal child. Now that sovereigns have become bourgeois in outlook, we no longer have any conception of the life of the son of a real king. Around him a confusing group of ambitious people, all striving fiercely one against the other. He alone can fulfil or check their ambitions. If they do not actually hate him, at least they detest most of his devoted followers. Not to be able to take a step without realizing that the ground beneath one's feet is mined; to be young, to wish to laugh, to play, to talk without constraint, to open one's heart to a friend—and to be forced to distrust everyone, to have to be careful about every move, every word, to conceal one's joy and one's tears, always to dissemble and always to be on one's guard—those are harsh rules for a child of ten. Granted that he is as thoughtless as children of that age are wont to be; even so he is harassed and worried. His friends explain Court intrigues to him. Whoever obtains his confidence and good will immediately attempts to impose his own personal likes and dislikes.

Surrounded by schemers, and more or less openly avowed enemies, the youthful Louis felt sure of himself only in the presence of his mother and his godfather, the Cardinal. Doubtless he guessed the nature of the relations between them, and, like the jealous and self contained child that he was, suffered accordingly. But he knew both of them were vitally interested in preserving his throne and protecting his life. Thence sprang

the gratitude that he always felt towards them, and especially towards his mother whom he loved perhaps more deeply than anyone else he ever knew. Saint Simon recounts that when Louis XIV died and his body was embalmed, his heart was taken to the Jesuit Church on the Rue Saint Antoine. "That heart," he comments, "which never loved anyone and which was so little loved." As usual, Saint-Simon is here distorting the truth. If we disregard all others, it cannot be denied that Louis XIV loved his mother and loved her deeply; that love he felt in the innermost recesses of his being; it was so strong that he fainted during the agony of her death. "We had to support him," says Madame de Motteville, "or he would have fallen to the floor. The bonds between them had been much stronger, and the mutual understanding between them much greater, *than it is usually the privilege of people of that rank to enjoy.* And for the same reason the destruction of this relationship was the harder to bear." In his "Mémoires" he speaks of this sad event with a nobility and restraint which bespeak the sovereign quite as much as the affectionate son. "Nature had broken the first bonds that bound me to my mother, the Queen. But an affection based on mutual love and sympathy is less easily destroyed than one which results merely from the ties of blood." A little further on he attributes the depth of his sorrow not merely to his realization of how much his mother had meant to him, but to what he terms "the nature of my heart." Lastly, sometime after the death of Anne of Austria, he replied to one who had clumsily attempted to console him, with the haughty remark in which, however, one divines more affection than pride: "Monsieur le Marquis de La

MARIE THERESE P. L. G. DE DIEV REINE DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE
THERESE L'Ornement de tout cet vniuers,
Illustre rejetton d'vne admirable tige
Dont la moindre vertu nous paroit vn prodige,
Ne permit aux humains le pouuoir par leur vers,
Non plus que du pinceau subtille plus hardy,
depeindre sçaura bien les beautez traits du visage,
Que nous admirons tous en nous donnant l'image,
Mais non pas les vertus seuls digne d'vn Louy.

PORTRAIT OF QUEEN MARIE THERESE

By Van Loo after an engraving by L. Visscher

Vallière, my sorrow at the loss of my mother, the Queen, is beyond the power of your imagination to conceive. I would have you know that my only consolation for this cruel blow must come from the hand that dealt it to me."

Aside from this passionate mother whom he loved so much, whose affection he eagerly desired, and this crafty Italian whose devotion to himself and to his mother he knew, there was not a soul in whom he could confide. The other members of his family were more or less openly against him. His uncle Gaston, whose hope of gaining the throne had been destroyed by the birth of the Dauphin, asked nothing better than to betray him. Men like Condé and Vendôme, quarelling with each other but united in their opposition to Gaston, were scarcely more reliable. The same was true of most of the other great lords, such as Bouillon, Montmorency, and La Rochefoucauld. They were interested solely in achieving power at the King's expense; they flooded the Regent with demands for pensions, governmental positions, sinecures, and permission to recruit private armies. And to top it all, the Third Estate, like the privileged classes, seemed disloyal to the crown —this Third Estate which had heretofore always supported the monarchy. In Paris there was practically a revolution; happily, except in a few of the provinces in the South of France, the movement did not spread throughout the country.

As happens at all great turning points in history, everything was unsettled. There was an agitation for the revision of privileges of titles and of standards of value. Great uneasiness was felt over the fact that the govern-

ment was in the hands of two foreigners. There was widespread resentment against the Prime Minister because he was an Italian, and against the Regent because she was Spanish. Mazarin was accused of delivering the country into the hands of the farmers of the revenue, and of exhausting it with his taxes. The truth was that the government was in desperate need of money to end the war against the Holy Roman Empire and Spain. Wrought up as they were, the adversaries of the Italian Prime Minister were forced to admit this—it was painfully obvious. But they then charged that the war was being prolonged to enrich the contractors. This same cheap accusation is almost always advanced under similar conditions. Doubtless the Cardinal had a very real love of money, an insatiable desire to increase his own fortune and the fortunes of his relatives. But a budget to carry on the war was imperative and he got it by the only means he could. The safety of the State was the first consideration. At once the grasping, idle people who never denied themselves the slightest luxury raised the cry that the Minister wanted "the very skin off the backs of the unfortunate Frenchmen, and that soon the poor wretches would be reduced to "eating grass like the beasts of the fields." Certain over-excited citizens took literally this old cliché, so often used by politicians and the clergy, and asserted that in the country the peasants were cropping grass like cows and sheep. Another example of that curious inconsistency which nothing has ever been able to eradicate! They wished France to be the greatest country in the world, but were unwilling to contribute a single man or a single crown for the purpose. To avoid doing so, they

raised a great outcry about the wretched condition of the country in general. And of course the Italian Prime Minister was to blame for it all.

The nobles and the Parlementarians, not to mention the religious party, attacked him because he followed Richelieu in levelling off the sharp distinctions between classes. It is undeniable that he attempted to lessen the prestige of clergy, nobles, and Parlementarians in order to facilitate the increasing centralization of the government. To the hatred of the upper classes was added that of the bourgeois and the common people. These Parisians who were uninterested in war against the Germans or the Spaniards became suddenly belligerent when it came to shouldering a gun and beating a drum to march against the tyrant. The bourgeois in Paris and the common people were furious at "that Mazarin." During the Fronde there was a genuine explosion of the old Parisian instinct for revolution; it was, in a way, a rehearsal for the uprisings of '89 and '93. At times one might have believed that it was the Revolution; the setting and the mob scenes were the same. Such quick sketches as the following show the similarity plainly:

The crowds erect a barricade,
Loud clamor on all sides is made.
They run, they charge, they beat retreat;
Carpenters, masons, bath-boys meet.
Bookbinder, printer, copyist,
Post boy, and stable boy resist.
And lawyer's clerks and sharpers bold,
Apothecaries, pedlars old,
Booksellers, jockeys, makers of coats,
Sword cutlers, wheelwrights, rowers of boats,

Streetporters, students, those who can gild,
Purveyors of nuts and liquors distilled,
The sellers of mustard and cakes at the fairs,
The ferrymen and porters of chairs,
The vendors of pipes and tobacco, the brewers,
The cleaners of wells and loathsome sewers,
And blacksmiths, carters, mud and dust carriers,
In countless numbers, saddlers and farriers,
Along with dealers in tripe, are arming;

Friends meet with friends in numbers alarming;
Polish their muskets and swords, and swear,
"Mordieu," while waving their pikes in the air.
Everywhere chains are stretched about
And cellars disgorge their barrels stout.
While wagons, tumbrils, carts are sought
And guns from hiding places brought.

At moments there runs through the excited crowds a rumbling that foreshadows the "Marseillaise" or even the "Carmagnole":

Now that the cannon all are ours,
The cannon with plenty of powder and ball,
Bourgeois, use now the flying hours,
Now that the cannon all are ours,
And face the task that before us towers.
Loud thunder the guns before we fall,
Now that the cannon all are ours,
The cannon with plenty of powder and ball.
. . . . . .

To arms, to arms! they're in the Faubourgs,
Bring, boy, my helmet, my coat of steel;
Come, beat the drums, loud let them peal,
To arms, to arms! they're in the Faubourgs.

All this passion was unleashed against the Italian Prime Minister, often against the King also, and most of all

against the Queen. "The Queen feels more secure at Saint Germain," writes a contemporary pamphleteer, but "we in Paris know how weak she is; *it would be easy to surprise the King at Saint Germain and bring him back. Such action is not without precedent, and it might even go further, if Parliament wishes . . .*"

There we have it—the Baker, the Baker's wife and their young apprentice, brought back from Versailles by the people of Paris. And what can be meant by the words, "even go further" if not to copy the English—to try the King, the Queen, and the Prime Minister and cut off their heads?

Historians are too accustomed to think of the movement that culminated in the Fronde as a superficial and insignificant disturbance. As a matter of fact it went deeper than is generally admitted. Everyone was at fever pitch. This fever entered such cloisters as Port Royal, where even the restraint of religion did not prevent definite revolutionary action. Most of the priests in Paris were Jansenists adhering to the Fronde and were critics of the established order—hence Louis XIV's well founded prejudice against that sect.

There was a widespread examination of the basis upon which the power of the monarchy rested. And, as in 1789, the theory of the absolute power of the King was beginning to be subjected to critical examination. It was declared that, in the beginning, the Kingship was elective, and that since its power was delegated from the people, it should be restricted by an elective assembly, and, finally, that taxes before being levied should be approved by the nation at large. What was lacking to these demands that the established order be overthrown? Only a more thor-

oughly informed public opinion, the co-operation of all parties, and, above all, revolutionary preparations and organization. There can be no doubt that in 1648 we were in the midst of a full-fledged revolution.

The young King was a helpless witness of all this disorder, and was extremely sensitive to it.

The theoretical discussion as to the rights and limitations of the royal power passed over his head. But the humiliations he suffered during the Fronde were a cruel lesson; he never forgot his flight to Saint Germain, the insolence of Condé's protection, the vile insults directed against his mother and the Cardinal, the violence of the mob. Immediately after the return of the royal family to Paris, the Captain of Gaston d'Orléans' Swiss Guards *and some of the people who feared that he would slip away, forced the Queen to let them see the young King in bed.* It is easy to imagine the fright and the mortification of the little boy at the sight of the wine-besotted old troopers, fully armed. A hundred years later it was to be a little imprisoned Dauphin who was frightened at the sight of a patrol of *sans-culottes.*

In January, 1651, when the First President, Mathieu Molé, appeared before the Regent with the air "more of a master than of a suppliant," to request her to release the princes, Condé, Conti, and Longueville, the young King could scarcely retain his self-control at the boldness of this request. According to Madame de Motteville, he later told his mother, that "if he had not thought it would displease her, *he would have silenced the First President and put him out of the room.*"

But the little King was growing up. The following year he was fourteen and was declared of age. He was

able at last to see things for himself and to make up his mind about them. Forced to flee from the capital and to wander from town to town, he noted the harm the Fronde had done the country. He felt that because of these people, France was disintegrating. While he was at Bourg, on the Dordogne, during the siege of Bordeaux, he shed tears of rage before his playmate, Loménie de Brienne, at the thought that the King of France was forced to reconquer his rightful inheritance. Young Brienne, seeing him in tears, remarked:

"What is the matter, my dear master? You are crying!"

"I won't always be a child," replied the King. "But be quiet. I don't want anyone to see my tears. These rascals here at Bordeaux won't always lay down the law to me."

So he needed the shock of adversity to make him actually conscious of his authority, his responsibility and his duty, to make him realize what it was to be a King. All this happened to him while he was still attaining his growth, a process which naturally took a long time with a nature as strong as his. He had, on the whole, been living a soft and indolent life, dividing his time between riding, hunting, bathing, and attending plays and ballets. Then suddenly he was forced by circumstances to take over the duties of a King. He did not merely resign himself to these as would have been the case with a person who has a taste only for private and intimate life and who hates public affairs. By instinct and by heredity he was a King. But he needed time to prove it. Thrown abruptly into the most perilous of crises, he discovered that his profession was not an easy one. His writing masters had been

but mocking him when they had made him copy out that pretty sentiment, "Homage is due to Kings. Their will is law." And now his subjects, even his intimate friends who were selfishly interested in upholding and protecting him, refused him homage and obedience. His will was far from law. Were it not for Mazarin and Turenne, he would be lost. What could be done by a child of ten, or even a youth of fourteen?

He also realized that these two mentors of his were powerless without him, without the support of that instinctive love which the common people had for him. The grasping Prime Minister and the rough soldier were tolerated only out of consideration for the future King. Threatened by danger, on the brink of exile and perhaps death, he saw what it is that holds a State together and how swiftly the work of centuries may be undone. He was left with a deep aversion to factional leaders and agitators in general, to all who, through clumsiness or base selfishness, were jeopardizing that delicate masterpiece, the French monarchy. And, finally, he acquired a profound knowledge of men, a knowledge free both from illusions and from bitterness and malice. He also soon learned to what sordid lengths, even to what crimes men may be driven by selfishness. But he did not become morbid or melancholy. He was no romantic hero, no Hamlet. Despite the vileness and the loathsome treachery all about him, he maintained his equanimity and moral equilibrium. He was like a good sportsman who knows and accepts the rules of the game, like the carefree youth who has made up his mind to enjoy life whatever its ugliness and discomforts. He pursued his profession with light heart, never scornful of humanity, not bitter against those

Frenchmen and those Parisians who applauded him wildly after having hurled the filthiest slander at him and his mother. In vain did his Italian Prime Minister tell him that he could never count on a Frenchman; of this bitter advice he remembered only so much as seemed to conform with the sad facts before him. His Eminence, the Neapolitan Cardinal, was doubtless thinking of his own interests when he extolled the devotion of foreign in contrast to French ministers. But it had just been demonstrated that the worst enemies of France were the Parlementarians and the Princes and Princesses who were openly negotiating with the Spanish and were seen strolling about the Bois de Boulogne accompanied by Spanish officers. Once more had it been proved that France had been built up and maintained by the monarchy despite the French people. The young King knew all this, but he also knew his subjects better than the Italian. "I am as much a Frenchman as I am a King," he used to say proudly. He knew with what sort of material he must work. In short, he loved and respected his subjects because they loved him, because he was conscious of the old and indefectible love of the French for their Kings, whom they thought of as Defenders of the People.

Certainly he desired from the bottom of his heart to be loved, to be the father of his People. But the terrible lesson of the Fronde taught him that nothing was more difficult. A King's profession could only be "delightful" if the Prince himself was forceful enough to delight in doing his duty, hard as it often was.

He was determined to do his best to learn this profession, although he had already perceived the difficulties facing him. He was conscious of his ignorance, his weak-

ness, his extreme youth. Nevertheless he repeated to himself what he said to his friend, Brienne, "Patience! I won't always be a child. *But let's keep quiet!*" Keeping quiet was his greatest strength, his most reliable defence during these years of struggle and apprenticeship. Until the day came when he might speak with authority and step forward in all his glory, he remained masked and silent. Long before he became Louis the Great he was content to be Louis the Silent.

CHAPTER II . .

THE CARDINAL

OR THE SCHOOL OF FASHION AND POLITICS

EVERYONE knows Saint-Simon's unfair description of Louis XIV: "Born with less than average intelligence, but with a spirit capable of being moulded, polished, and refined, he borrowed from others without imitating them and without embarrassment; he profited immensely from having been surrounded throughout his life by highly gifted people of widely varied interests, by men and women of all ages, all tastes, and all stations in life." This description, however, is self-contradictory. Unwittingly it honors the man as he actually was. To call him a man "with less than average intelligence," is to say that he was an imbecile. But can a man without intelligence "mould himself," "become refined," and, above all, "borrow from people without imitating them"? Never has it happened. The mediocre or the imbeciles when they imitate, do so slavishly; they assume a disguise, they copy the refinement of others more or less clumsily, but as for being truly "refined" or moulded into what they wish to be—it never happens! We shall see what Louis XIV added on his part to what he obtained from his subordinates and his teachers. His was

a conception of royalty entirely original and personal, that was no less than a stroke of genius, something quite unknown before his time. But, as Saint-Simon remarks, there can be no doubt that he profited immensely from having spent his life among talented people. He loved keenness, wit, and intelligence; he hated gossip, personal disparagement, jealous envy, and the destructive tendency of scepticism. His efforts were preëminently constructive. He had conceived a magnificent masterpiece which he wished to realize; he was annoyed at all who threatened or endangered its success. To achieve his end he enlisted all possible aid. Like all great leaders, he had the ability to get out of men all that they had to give—and a little more.

Among those who helped him mould himself into what he wished to be, the Cardinal was an outstanding figure. Mazarin had no real genius, but in many fields he was able to orient Louis. He was a guide and, in a way, a spiritual father. There was something providential in the meeting of these two men.

To recapitulate: this Italian clad in purple, with his insinuating manner and his disconcerting habit of gliding silently in and out of rooms, was a fascinating character. Anne of Austria soon discovered this. On his first appearance at a council meeting he dazzled the old ministers of Louis XIII. "A tall, pleasant, handsome man, with brown hair, sparkling eyes, quick witted, his face mellow and attractive." Such is the picture of him in the "Mémoires" of Oliver d'Ormesson, who was himself present upon that occasion. This prelate, a former Captain in the papal infantry, was a man of the world, accustomed to

mingle in the highest society. Brought up in a Jesuit school in Rome, he finished his studies at the University of Alcala, in Spain, whither he had accompanied the young Jerome Colonna, son of his patron. He had lived in Rome, the cosmopolitan centre of art and culture; in Spain, the richest, the most showy, and, in a thousand ways, the most civilized country in the world at this time. In the most discreet, least ostentatious manner possible, he had cultivated æsthetic tastes and a love for the voluptuous; he had studied the art of enjoying life, of embellishing and regulating it; his outlook, moreover, was tolerant; he had rid himself of a host of traditional prejudices; his views were those of a man who had travelled widely, who had breathed the air of the most "advanced" and beautiful countries in the world; they were modern to an extreme and were very exquisite, and consequently they scandalized the Parlementarians of Paris and even the rough veterans of the wars in Germany, Catalonia, and Flanders.

This foreigner first bewildered them, and then aroused their hatred and rage. They did not wait until the Fronde to pry into his past. They knew that he was of humble parentage. But calumny was soon at work depreciating him still more: "It is well known," writes a pamphleteer of the opposition, "that his grandfather was a poor Sicilian, a dealer in hats who was forced into bankruptcy and had to leave the country. His father, then a young man, left penniless by this event, went to Rome and secured a position as a groom; he was soon promoted and became chief steward in the household of a man of rank (Philip Colonna, head of that illustrious family). As a result of his industry and the incidental money that he was able to

pick up in this position, he saved enough to enable him to purchase a share in the office of Master of the Post between Rome and Naples." The Cardinal's business instinct and his indifference to religion aroused a suspicion that he was of Jewish extraction. "I have learned," declares a monk, attached to the household of the Coadjutor de Retz, "through one of the monasteries of our order in Italy, where the report of his unheard-of good luck has caused his fellow countrymen to recall his forebears, that he was born at Palermo, the son of Pierre Mazarin, *a vendor, dealer in rosaries,* who left the country in bankruptcy. . . . This Pierre's ancestors were from Mazarini (Mazzara?) in Sicily, where they renounced their belief in Judaism."

The error is self-evident. He has made the clumsy mistake of confusing a "dealer in rosaries," *chapelet,* with a "dealer in hats," *chapelier.* However, to one acquainted with Mazarin's psychology, this accusation that he was a Jew is immensely intriguing and suggestive. However that may be, it is certain that Mazarin was of very humble origin. This son of a Master of the Post who becomes not only a Prince of the Church (that is easily understandable) but the veritable sovereign of a great State, the lover and perhaps the husband of a Queen, who marries his nieces to reigning princes and to princes of the blood in France—this parvenu gives us one more example of the mingling of classes then going on; he shows us to what unbounded heights a man from the people might rise under the old regime.

However, dazzling as was the career of this all-powerful minister, his background has remained fairly obscure. Even after he entered political life there are a number of

points on which we have little information. For example, was he, as was claimed, a naturalized Frenchman? Had he received Holy Orders? Was he actually married to Anne of Austria? Most of these questions seem insoluble. Historians assure us that in April 1639 he was granted naturalization papers, and that they were registered by the Parlement of Paris in June of that same year. Nevertheless on the Cardinal's death, Guy Patin wrote to one of his correspondents, "It has been discovered that Mazarin was not a naturalized Frenchman. . . . Some claim that he was scheming to become Pope and that his naturalization would have prevented that." It is difficult to verify such points today. The same is true about the question as to whether or not he received Holy Orders. Those who are best informed think that he did. They point out that before he was promoted and made a Cardinal, Pope Urban VIII had made him a canon of Saint John Lateran—definite proof, we are told, that he was a priest, "because in Rome only priests were allowed to be canons of patriarchal basilicas." Moreover Daniel de Cosnac in his "Mémoires" declares that he saw the Cardinal administer extreme unction to his niece, the Princess de Conti, as she lay dying. Consequently he must have received Holy Orders. Yet at the time of the Fronde it was generally believed that the Cardinal and the Queen had been privately married. It was even claimed that "Father Vincent"—the future Saint Vincent de Paul—gave his approval to their union. If this is true, Mazarin could not have been a priest, unless he had obtained a dispensation from the Pope and such dispensations, it seems, were very rarely accorded and then only in cases of desperate necessity.

There is, however, no sure proof that this marriage ever took place. We only know definitely that the Queen was passionately fond of the Cardinal. Were they lovers, in the modern sense of the word? It is impossible to prove it from their correspondence, affectionate as it was. The two correspondents expressed their affection in conventional phrases, the exact meaning of which it is impossible to establish. The Queen was devoutly religious; the Cardinal an official of the Church. Such expressions of love as occur in their letters may also be found in books of piety; it may be that their implications were entirely spiritual. If so, their love was platonic, like that of the Queen's brother, Philip IV of Spain, for Sister Marie d'Agreda, his confidante, who from the depths of her convent directed the Royal conscience. However, in the epistles of Anne of Austria and Mazarin there is an ardor and an emphasis quite different from those of Philip IV and Sister Marie. Often their letters refer to "bonds that nothing can sunder." But though we grant that those bonds were only those of friendship or of platonic love, there is no denying that the Queen threw herself into this love with all her heart. Mazarin seems to have been infinitely more reserved. To make her attachment to Mazarin seem the more harmless, Anne of Austria replied to those of her friends who remonstrated with her that this handsome man did not like women—an accusation frequently repeated by libellers and pamphleteers during the Fronde. How are we to distinguish between truth and falsehood in all this? At any rate it is evident that, in exchange for the passionate love of the Queen, Mazarin pledged her the most absolute devotion—or at least he did, in so far as such a shifty man was capable of such a sen-

timent. In his notebook, under the dates May 20 and 21, 1643, he writes, "I wish to be looked upon as *her personal servant;* it is imperative that Her Majesty agree to this. . . . Her Majesty intends to place me in charge of her private household in order that I may live near her and may be able to take care of her private funds." Thus at first he wished to be regarded as a servant who had sworn deathless fidelity to his mistress. He offered absolute devotion, a quality for which sovereigns in those days, cruelly isolated in their royal position, were so eager. The Neapolitan built his fortune upon and obtained his power from an almost servile devotion which gained him the absolute confidence of the Queen.

What was the attitude of the young King towards this wily and secretive man? One can only guess, for the King, as secretive as his minister, never voiced his personal reactions. He probably always held it against the Cardinal that he possessed the Queen's affection; but he knew also that he could rely completely upon this foreigner. He had infinite esteem and respect for his godfather. Mazarin, for his part, felt an almost paternal solicitude for this royal child. He, the Queen, and the King formed an inseparable trio, united by a sort of family pact. Whatever he thought of his minister, the young Prince was grateful to him for holding the safety of the State above all else. He had complete confidence in him. In the letters between the Queen and the Cardinal, he was referred to as "the confidant." Moreover, the King admired the wisdom and the skill of this clever politician. Born with an instinctive feeling for pomp and magnificence, a real taste for art and a love of luxury, he was conscious of a bond of sympathy between himself and this gorgeous

Italian, this brilliant cavalier who had lived in Rome and Madrid, and who had introduced into the middle-class and somewhat sordid mediocrity of Paris not merely the purple trappings of a Cardinal, but a brilliant reflection, as it were, of the Lands of Splendor and Beauty.

With eager eyes and ears this timid and uncertain youth drank in the lessons to be learned from such a master!

Soon after he became Prime Minister, Mazarin moved to the Palais Royal in order to be near the Queen; later he had an apartment in the Louvre, above that of the King. Consequently he spent little time in the magnificent Hôtel Tubeuf, later known as the Mazarin Palace, which he had enlarged and decorated with such care. It became a sort of retreat "where," according to Madame de Motteville, "he loved to retire occasionally, to relax amidst the marvels he had accumulated, and where his nieces lived."

Thus the young Louis XIV was upon terms of real intimacy with his minister. The apprentice had his model ever before him.

It is easy to picture the amazement and the admiration of this somewhat foppish youth when he was introduced into the office of his godfather and found him sitting in an armchair with two monkeys on his knees; or, perhaps, making the little beasts dance in grotesque parody of the ladies at Court. In the corner was a censer into which footmen would throw tablets of amber or of jasmine. In summer, in true Italian style, there were various refreshing drinks set out upon a table, sherbets, lemon and orange juice, lemonades of all sorts. The room was filled with a thousand exquisite scents. The Cardinal himself was bathed in perfume. It was even said that he perfumed

CARDINAL MAZARIN

his monkeys. There was a rumor that he had Italian nuns make scents, pomades, and perfumes especially for him. His Spanish gloves were scented with musk; his mustache pointed and glued to his cheeks *à la bigotère,* in the manner made fashionable by Philip IV. His ribbons and tassels became a scandal. The strict were outraged by his taste for the theatre, the opera, the marionettes, the ballet. He surrounded himself with buffoons, singers, dancers, and comedians. The young King was carried away by all this. He was most grateful to his godfather for loving these pleasures and luxuries which he himself liked so much. But the conservative Parisian bourgeois bristled with indignation at this invasion of Spanish and Italian manners and customs. They accused the Cardinal of "living in decadent luxury." It is amusing to read the furious and contemptuous letters of Guy Patin about this fastidious and perfumed Prince of the Church. In the face of such evidences, discreet though they were, of a manner of life so much more sumptuous and refined than any heretofore known in France, it is easy to picture the envious rage of these charlatans, these pillars of the law from Marais or the Place Maubert who thought it the height of debauchery on a pleasant Sunday in the spring to go out, perched on a donkey, to their gardens at Suresnes or Bagnolet and to spend the day picking gooseberries or cherries.

But the Cardinal's activities were not confined to the frivolous; he was an exceptionally well informed dilettante; a lover of well made books, of statues, pictures, works of art of all sorts and, like most of his compatriots, he had a passion for building. His library was famous, as were his stables. At the time of the Fronde, they used

to call him "the man who builds stables" and "the man with the library." He transformed the Hotel Tubeuf into a museum. The Parlementarians reproached him bitterly about it. The modesty of these Jansenists was offended by "the disgraceful nakedness" of his statues; they calculated that a single antique marble statue must have cost "more than two thousand crowns." They enumerated his ebony cabinets, his marble tables "carved in the shape of birds," others "on which precious stones and gold are arranged in attractive designs," still others done in mosaic, his mirrors, his bowls of Venetian glass, his ivory bedsteads; lastly came a really scandalous and diabolical detail. "There is a chair in a remote and obscure part of the house which, if one sits down in it and pulls a cord, goes up or down as one wishes!" There can be no doubt about it; this describes a lift. Mazarin had one installed in his palace. This comfort loving Italian invented the lift two hundred years before our engineers thought of it.

Besides his passion for building, the Cardinal also liked to give lavish entertainments. Those that he gave during his last years were forerunners of the famous fêtes later to be given at Versailles. Stingy as he was in private matters, Mazarin knew how to arrange magnificent displays in public when he thought proper. Among other examples, Mademoiselle de Montpensier has recorded "a most gallant and unusual affair of the Cardinal's during the winter of 1658." He gave a dinner, followed by a lottery, to Their Majesties, the Queen and the Princess of England. The halls of the Palace were full "of every imaginable variety of precious stones, jewels, articles of furniture, fabrics, cabinets, Chinese vases, crystal chande-

liers, silver dishes, perfumes, gloves, ribbons, fans. . . . They were worth four or five hundred thousand francs. . . . His gallant generosity made a great stir throughout the kingdom and in foreign lands, as it was most unusual. . . ."

Thus the Cardinal had no regard for expense when he wished to dazzle or astonish. Louis XIV remembered that lesson, as he remembered his godfather's lottery—a thoroughly Italian novelty which he later perfected at Versailles. But in that, as in all else, from his fancy for perfumes to his taste for buildings, pictures, statues, beautiful furniture, his gift for making life richer and more refined, the great King was always a pupil—a pupil endowed with genius, to be sure, but none the less a pupil —of Mazarin.

In more personal affairs the influence of the master upon his disciple was no less decided. Their moral codes were not far apart. There were, however, many clear-cut differences in temperament between them. For example, despite what has been said, Louis XIV was, at heart, religious. The Cardinal's religion was a much more uncertain affair. His enemies claimed repeatedly that he was only nominally a Christian and that his morals, like his political policies, were pagan. "Cardinal Mazarin," writes Madame de Motteville, "is suspected of not having much religion. In his youth in Italy he had an unsavory reputation; and, as I have said before, he has never shown enough reverence for the most holy mysteries of our faith." Does that imply that he was a libertine? Nothing that we know about his habits permits us to infer this. All that is definitely established is that his piety was not

especially fervent. There was nothing particularly edifying about his death. The proprieties were observed but that was all. The Abbé de Choisy even goes so far as to say, "*He died less like a Christian than like a philosopher;* he was remarkably steadfast and peaceful, a result, he himself said, of the innocence of his past life."

Louis XIV met his death in quite a different fashion. But he probably owed it to the Cardinal that all his life he mistrusted and had an aversion to those who were devoutly religious. From the beginning of his ministry, Mazarin had the religious factions against him. In one of his notebooks he jotted down, "All the convents are against me, especially Val de Grace." And further on, "All of the ideas of the religious factions are ineffective; it is for that reason that, under the guise of serving God, *they are actually working against the best interests of the State.* During a Regency, such as this, when there are so many contending factions among the people, nobles and Parlementarians and with France engaged in the greatest war she has ever faced, *a strong government is absolutely necessary.* But the Queen still wavers. . . . She subordinates public to private affairs and both to matters of religion. She ought to do the opposite. . . . Before everything else, she should apply herself, to the limit of her ability, to the government of the kingdom and the education of the King; she should realize that a moment devoted to this duty is more pleasing in the sight of God than hours spent at prayer, visiting churches, listening to sermons, and attending vespers."

That sounds suspiciously like heresy. But there can be no doubt that as far as politics were concerned, Mazarin was right in his opposition to these pious conspirators.

They would have drawn him into reconciliation with Spain and crusades against the Turks and the Protestants. Their openly admitted ambition was to reunite the Catholic world in a concerted opposition to heretics and infidels. The successor to Richelieu had too much common sense to let himself be drawn into any such adventure. Louis XIV agreed entirely with him. Following the example of the Cardinal, he was constantly on his guard against the schemes of the religious factions; he was vigorously opposed to ultramontane interference in non-religious matters. But, unlike his godfather, he was fundamentally devout. He was so attracted by the devotional life of his mother that the Cardinal became disturbed about it. He did not wish his pupil to become a monk. On the feast day of Saint Louis, in 1648, the King attended the service in the Church of the Grands Jesuits when the Coadjutor of Paris pronounced a eulogy of the Saint. The orator had taken as his text the words: "*Audi, fili mi, disciplinam patris tui.*" From beginning to end the sermon exhorted the young Prince to apply himself only to the furtherance of religion, to bring about the reign of Jesus Christ within his kingdom as within his heart. This sermon was not to Mazarin's taste; he thought it seditious. It is true that the orator was the future Cardinal de Retz and that conditions gave this lesson an unusually menacing note. But this slight incident, when it is considered in connection with a number of other similar ones, is none the less a valuable indication of the Cardinal's psychology.

This attitude of the Cardinal and his manner of viewing such questions had a distinct influence upon the formation of the King's character. There are still other

similarities between master and pupil which seem to be the more or less direct result of the influence of the one upon the other.

This Prince of the Church, whose devotion was so slight, had a deep attachment for the goods of this world and especially for money. The younger Brienne in his "Mémoires" pictures him just before his death in carpet slippers, and leaning heavily on his cane making a last visit to his picture gallery. He would stop before a certain tapestry or work of art and, heaving a sad sigh, would say, "To think of parting with all this!" Of all his earthly possessions, the one which he valued the most was his health. All through his life he took great care of himself; he was a slave to his doctors—and eventually they killed him prematurely, as they killed Louis XIV. They exhausted his strength with their medicines and their repeated bleedings. This pale man, likewise, did not have a drop of blood left in his veins. His bloodless flesh was decomposing. His legs were spotted with livid blotches, he had œdema in his feet which, according to Guy Patin, "were enveloped in horse dung." During his final illness he was purged *sixty times* by Vallot the King's physician "with a quarter of an ounce of senna and two ounces of manna." Purged sixty times! One feels that one must be dreaming when one reads those horrible details. One understands why on his death bed Mazarin protested to Vallot "that he had been the cause of his death."

If Louis XIV also obeyed his doctors' orders too submissively, if he believed too blindly in the power of medicine, it must be admitted that his minister did not set him a very good example. And if he had an innate love for money and a tendency to hoard it, if he attached too much

value to the goods of this world, it is but further evidence of the influence of the Cardinal upon him.

But in the relations between Louis XIV and Mazarin we have to consider not so much a matter of the more or less direct influence of the one on the other, of conscious and considered imitation on the part of the young King, as a case of the actual domination of the elder man. Mazarin literally gave his young sovereign lessons in politics; the latter proved himself a worthy pupil.

In 1660 the ambassador from Venice wrote his government: "The entire weight of his affection seems to be thrown toward the Cardinal. It is not enough to say that the King thinks of him as a useful and necessary minister and grants him his favor because it is to his interest to do so, or that he leaves him in power because he has no alternative. It must be admitted that *there is some deep, hidden sympathy between them*, a definite subordination of mind and will as a result of which a great prince gives way before a private individual endowed with genius. . . . The King sees his minister several times a day. He asks his advice, and, one might almost say, obeys his orders even down to the pettiest and most personal matters. If anyone speaks to him about business or asks a favor, he refers them to the Cardinal. The most that he can do is to intercede for them. As soon as he leaves his bed in the morning, he goes to see the Cardinal, whether the latter is in his apartment as the Louvre or has retired to his own palace. He does this without ceremony, in the most intimate manner. The Cardinal does not usher the King in, nor does he show him out. If he is busy, the King is not above waiting for him. If he is in conference with

the ministers the King stays for a moment, says good-morning to the Cardinal and goes out. But the talk between the two usually lasts a full hour; during their conversation the Cardinal tells him everything that has happened, instructs him, impresses his own ideas on his mind. Consequently, since His Majesty is receiving such accurate and valuable information and advice from so great a man, there seems little doubt that, if he avoids falling under the influence of another minister, he will become a very great prince."

This passage is most interesting because of the way in which it reveals the inner workings of the King's mind. These foreigners from Venice certainly appraised him with more discernment than the French. Without doubt there did exist a "deep, hidden sympathy," a physical and intellectual rapport between the King and his godfather. There was Italian as well as Spanish blood in the son of Anne of Austria and the grandson of Marie de Medici. The Neopolitan Mazarin, a subject of His Catholic Majesty, and the Son of France understood each other without difficulty. There was also an "intellectual domination" of one over the other. This is not surprising when we remember that the young sovereign was both very conscious of his dignity and his personal ability, and yet timid and unsure of himself. It was only natural that a young prince of twenty-two who wished to learn his profession should apprentice himself to one of the greatest statesmen of his age. But the pupil was anxious to reign in his own right. All France demanded it. A host of enemies tried to embroil him with the Cardinal. And still he left him in power, even listened submissively to what he said. The Venetian ambassador hints that he did so out of fear, be-

cause he had no alternative. The King was afraid to dismiss his minister for fear there would be a renewal of the Fronde. But it was also from gratitude and because he had a profound admiration for the Cardinal's political talent. Lastly, let us note the easy-going manners, the simplicity of this future autocrat whose relations with his minister were so unassuming, who waited patiently to be heard in his own palace, who came and went like anyone else, who put aside all ceremony, even his own vanity. This is quite a different picture from the one usually presented by historians. His unfailing respect and deference to an old man to whom he owed so much reflects the greatest honor upon him.

It should be noted that the incidents recorded by the Venetian ambassador occurred in the year 1660—a year before the Cardinal's death. It was therefore *in extremis* that Mazarin agreed to divulge his secrets of government to his master. Contemporary testimony is unanimous in thinking this rather late. Must we, therefore, jump to the conclusion that Mazarin purposely neglected the political instruction of Louis XIV just as he neglected his formal education? We have already seen what the latter consisted of. But it is best to beware of dogmatic statements about a man with as subtle a character as Mazarin. It is partly true, but it is also partly false. His attitude seems to be fairly well explained by the necessities of the delicate and unstable position in which he was placed as a foreign Prime Minister at the Court of France. His entire power was based upon the love of the Queen and the gratitude of the King,—highly fickle and undependable emotions. The Cardinal's personal programme consisted entirely in making himself indispensable to his protectors

and even a little feared by them. To do this it was imperative that the King should not be in a position to do without him. Mazarin had even foreseen that he might be forced out of power and had arranged to leave his pupil a guide who was imbued with his ideas and doctrines. This was to be Alphonse Mancini, his nephew, who died prematurely, taking with him all of his uncle's hopes. On the other hand, he was too good a judge of men, too far sighted, not to see through the young King's mask of silence and submission and to realize that he was determined to rule alone. Some day or other he would decide to relieve him of his duties. Would it not be better to anticipate his wishes and coöperate with his sovereign in doing what the latter would probably do, sooner or later, without him?

Moreover, little by little, he had come to understand the secret of the King's belated maturity. He divined the outcome of his slow development. His remark to the Marshal de Villeroy is well known. One day as they were leaving an audience which the King had granted the deputies from Burgundy, Mazarin remarked to the Prince's tutor, "Did you notice, Monsieur le Maréchal, *the way the King listened with the air of a master and spoke like a father? He has started a trifle late, but he will go further than most.*" It is worth recalling another remark of his, made to the Marshal de Gramont, who, like so many others, was doubtless misled by the apparent slowness of the royal intelligence. "Ah! Monsieur le Maréchal, you don't know him! He has in him *the stuff for four kings and an honest man.*" Louis XIV had not even awaited his godfather's invitation before taking an interest in his own affairs and starting to learn his profession. On his own

initiative he began to inform himself on all subjects; he investigated the various governmental departments, did all he could to draw out foreign ambassadors, sought to make use of everyone and everything. He therefore had a good background for the lessons of his Prime Minister which, it is true, were a little late in beginning.

Louis XIV was very fortunate to have such an instructor. No one was better informed than Mazarin about the European politics of those days, no one better acquainted with "court secrets," as they were called, or with the ever mysterious ramifications of papal diplomacy. Born a Spanish subject, educated at the University of Alcala, having a fluent command of the language, early in life he had become acquainted with the customs and the stratagems of Spanish diplomacy, at this time, shrewder and more unscrupulous than any other in Christendom. He had been the papal vice-legate at Avignon and the nuncio at Paris. Brought up, as it were, in the Roman Curia, he knew all of its twistings and turnings. Thus he was able to enlighten his pupil upon some of the fundamental principles of the papal political policies, handed down from the accumulated wisdom of a thousand years, and based solely upon spiritual prestige and intelligence—intelligence restraining the power of brute force. We shall see whether or not Louis XIV was able to profit by this lesson. His Majesty learned from His Eminence how much could be accomplished by prudence, by procrastination, by holding to a given plan, by always looking ahead and leaving nothing to chance, by working out comprehensive plans and reflecting upon them at length, correcting them to fit the course of events, check-

ing them up with practical experience and, in the end, bringing them to a triumphant conclusion. To his Roman versatility and tenacity, Mazarin added the forcefulness of Italian realism. His enemies accused him of using Machiavellian methods; there can be no doubt that, in the best sense of the word, he was a disciple of Machiavelli. His healthy and robust realism fortunately offset the dangerous tendency of his pupil to succumb to the usual shortcomings of French politicians—empty idealism, over-emphasis upon abstract logic, sentimentality, crueller in its final results than the most deliberate cruelty.

More than once during his course of instruction Louis XIV must have marvelled that this cleric should be such a skilful statesman. Not only was he at home in fashionable society, but he had lived in Rome, the religious centre of the world, whence all the temporal interests of Christianity were controlled, and he looked at things from an almost universal standpoint. Moreover, he was extraordinarily skilful in adapting his policies to the point of view of the French people—not that his unpopularity in France was lessened thereby. There was a longstanding national prejudice against ecclesiastical Prime Ministers. In his youth Richelieu, then a mere bishop, addressed the States-General of 1614 and protested vigorously against that prejudice. The gist of his speech was to the effect that clerics made the best governmental officials because both their education and their habitual duties fitted them for the task; they usually possessed the requisite intelligence and culture; they were accustomed to handling people; and finally because of their profession they had no personal axes to grind. All the arguments in the world could not allay the misgivings of the French. Louis XIV,

bowing to the will of his people, never appointed ecclesiastical ministers. Having seen Mazarin's methods, this autocrat was fearful of anyone who had enough power to jeopardize his own, and distrusted anyone whose relations with a foreign power had been so close as to arouse suspicions of his loyalty to France. Most of all, the memory of his long submission to the will of the Cardinal must have inspired him with a terror of red hats.

Exactly what lessons did Mazarin give Louis XIV? The Cardinal's enemies claimed that they were valueless. In his "Mémoires" the Abbé de Choisy writes, "I have heard the Marshal de Villeroy, who was always present at these lessons, say that they were based upon general rules, to treat the nobles and princes of the blood like the dirt beneath his feet—never to allow himself to be on intimate terms with courtiers—preserve a stern face when people asked favors—to cultivate his innate and regal gift of dissembling—to maintain an impenetrable secrecy in the conduct of all state affairs—to promise extravagantly, but to fulfil few promises—to avoid cruelty: 'Take their money,' said the Cardinal, 'but spare their lives.' " Much of that is utterly banal, but it contains some wise advice. The admonition that Louis XIV remembered best was that which advised him to treat the nobles, and especially the princes, *like the dirt beneath his feet.* This descendant of the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs was, at heart, democratic, as was the Cardinal, who had begun life in the stables of a director of the post and who later had the revolutionary fasces and axe put on his coat of arms. Long before the events of 1793 that emblem might be seen upon the pediments of the Mazarin Palace and the Collège des Quatre Nations—the only difference being that the red hat of

the Cardinal was in the place later occupied by the revolutionary red cap.

However, it is reasonable to suppose that Mazarin did not confine himself to generalities. In his thirst for information, the young King doubtless demanded more than that, and under the tutelage of the Cardinal he became acquainted not merely with the handling of routine affairs, but with the broader aspect of European problems. We are told that Louis XIV had Mazarin's last recommendations written down in order that he might reflect upon them constantly. Why should he have shown such regard for them if they were commonplace generalizations?

The King set great store by the political wisdom of his tutor, and respected it even in later life. But he also knew that he too had in him the makings of a master politician; besides, he learned things about the Cardinal that must have revolted him and turned him against his former master: such things as his trickery, his questionable dealings with farmers of the revenue, his speculations in military supplies, his petty, underhanded business undertakings—for he had a brokerage business and also speculated in precious stones and paintings. But the King realized that the most important quality in a Prime Minister was the ability to attend to the affairs of state. After all, what difference if this Italian lined his own pockets as long as he preserved the monarchy and increased the power of France? Undeniably, however, the young sovereign was tiring of this guardianship. All contemporaries agree that when Mazarin died, it was high time.

He died, we are told, "still hoping to become Pope." If he could have left his position as minister to assume the papal tiara it would have been a glorious exit for him.

Some time before he had cherished the plan of having Louis XIV elected Emperor at the Diet of Frankfort. For a moment the young sovereign and his minister had a picture of realizing the dream of the Middle Ages—Pope and Emperor, "the two halves of God" united to govern Christendom. But it was only a dream. As Louis XIV knew full well, the King of France could never become Emperor of Germany. And Mazarin, once seated on the pontifical throne, would not have been a French Pope. However that may be, these magnificent and impracticable dreams left their mark upon Louis XIV. They counteracted the rather commonplace realism of Mazarin's political philosophy. His Christian Majesty never failed to protect his rights and to maintain an attitude of unyielding firmness toward the Pope. And although he knew that his dream of becoming Emperor was much more costly than it was worth, he loved to have it said and to think—at first, at least—that he was worthy of the title.

CHAPTER III

MARIE MANCINI

OR THE SCHOOL OF LOVE

AS A result of the Cardinal's instructions and his own natural ability, the King gave evidence of increasing wisdom. A bleak and joyless childhood spent between an indolent and amorous mother on the one hand, and a statesman interested only in affairs on the other, the humiliations he suffered during the Fronde, his flight to Saint Germain, the aimless wandering about a kingdom that was falling to pieces, the hateful treachery of relatives and of some of the most distinguished personages in the state, had all contributed to develop the serious side of his nature. More and more he felt driven to prepare himself as best he could for the formidable tasks that he was to face. Under Marshal Turenne he began to learn the duties of a soldier and of a commander. He got first-hand experience of the realities of war; the knowledge of what it cost to win a battle or to capture a city taught him to be sparing of the blood shed in his service. Mazarin revealed to him the inside workings of politics. Although the treaties recently negotiated had left France in an imposing position, her enemies were

certainly not disarming. To the north, Spain, the most dangerous of them all, still threatened the French capital. Condé, traitor to King and country, had gone over to the Spanish camp. Such things could not fail to alarm the young sovereign.

At this period—he was about eighteen years old—he spent most of his time with the army. He went about among the troops, inspected trenches, exposed himself fearlessly to danger. He intended to prove that he was a good soldier and unafraid. This martial, out-of-door life seems to have changed his appearance. When, during the siege of Stenay and Montmédy in 1657, the Grande Mademoiselle came to Sedan to effect a reconciliation with the Royal family, the Queen-Mother took pains to warn her that she would no longer find the pretty boy of old. "The Queen," she writes in her "Mémoires," "told me that I would find the King quite changed! . . . that he had become very tall, heavy, and plain!" He soon reaches Sedan. "The Queen," says Mademoiselle, "expected him for dinner. He rode up at a gallop and was so wet and muddy that when the Queen saw him through the window, she turned to me and said, 'I hope you will not see him until he has changed his clothes.' I answered that it made no difference to me. He came in dishevelled as he was; I thought he looked well." This young trooper who loved to be seen dismounting from his horse in muddy boots and with the smell of powder still about him, was not merely experiencing the stimulus of martial glory; he was under the strong influence of sensual passion. He had already been infatuated a number of times. But, as much from youthful conceit as from regard for convention, he resolved to become a polished and accomplished

cavalier and gallant. Thus he was often to be seen with the Cardinal's nieces, who lived at the Louvre and entertained brilliantly.

All this was normal and quite to be expected on the part of the Prince. Soon, however, the peaceful and undisturbed surface of his life was shattered by a devastating passion—a passion strong enough to upset everything, not merely to rack his heart, but to involve him in a serious catastrophe, to renew the activities of the Fronde, to render ineffectual all the Cardinal's policies, to plunge the King and all France into chaos. This growing youth, usually so rational, narrowly escaped throwing himself into the arms of the most unbalanced, the most dangerous, the most deadly woman he could have encountered.

The story is well enough known; there is no need to repeat it. Let us merely attempt to discover what lies behind the facts, to penetrate into the innermost feelings of the two lovers and to see what influence this passion may have had upon the subsequent amorous life of the King.

It will be recalled that the King met Marie Mancini during the illness that preceded the death of Madame Mancini, her mother. As the young man was on his way to visit the invalid, he would stop for a moment in a room just off the hall where Marie was waiting for him. He had previously been quite interested in her elder sister, the haughty Olympe, a year later to become Comtesse de Soissons. But Olympe was as dull as she was malicious. They called her "La Becasse" (The Goose). She alienated the King with her haughty and insolent mannerisms. Louis XIV had a decided taste for quick-wittedness. He took to Marie at once because of her intelligence and also,

perhaps, because she was unhappy. With great skill she got him first to pity her; then he fell violently in love, and little by little this love became a veritable mania with him.

Just what sort of woman was this royal mistress, whose story has been so poetically exaggerated in legend? Throughout her life she was an adventuress, ever intriguing and giving scandal. In her "Apologie" she herself tells us that she was born in Rome, the daughter of Marguerite Mazzarini, the Cardinal's sister, and of Laurent Mancini, a Roman noble who presented his wife with eight children, five girls and three boys. She was the third and probably the least good looking of the daughters. From the time of Marie's birth, her mother had a mysterious, relentless dislike for her that seems to have sprung from some secret depth of her nature; the little girl's homeliness was merely a pretext. As if to justify her mother's aversion, her father, a great believer in astrology, had her horoscope read; it announced that she would be "the cause of great evil." Thus from birth Marie was marked as a malevolent creature.

Doubtless she soon gave evidence of her evil nature, for her parents were eager to get her off their hands. She was put in the Campo-Marzio Convent where one of her aunts was the Superior. For a while they thought they would get her to become a nun, even against her own wishes. It was as if there were a curse upon her. Society had spurned her, yet she loved nothing but society. Much of her life was spent resisting the efforts of those who wished to immure her in a cell. She was ever a fugitive. She would enter a convent only to leave it as soon as possible. But, curiously enough, there were times

when, although she knew she had no religious vocation, she sincerely wished to take the veil. The moment it was forced upon her, however, she rebelled violently, even though the moment before she had desired it. Whenever anyone attempted to lay hands upon her she became furious and intractable. Her stubbornness equalled her pride and her conceit. They might kill her, but she would never give in.

At the age of thirteen she came to France accompanied by her mother, her younger sisters, her aunt, Martinozzi, and the latter's daughter, the future Duchesse de Modène. They were a hungry tribe who streamed through the breach made for them by their Cardinal uncle; they made themselves as much at home as if they had been in a conquered country. But before presenting his swarthy little nieces at Court, the uncle thought it wise to rid them of their Italian mannerisms. They stopped off first at Aix where they visited their elder sister, Victoire, the wife of the Duke de Mercœur, Governor of Provence. Then the Cardinal had them come to Paris and installed them in the Convent of the Visitation, in the Faubourg Saint Jacques. Under the tutelage of Mother Superior de Lamoignon, Marie made such extraordinary rapid progress in her French that her uncle toyed with the idea of marrying her to the Duke de la Meilleraye, Grand Master of Artillery. But the Duke, doubtless repulsed by the ugliness of Marie who was "lean, plain, and black as a prune," protested that he was madly in love with the younger sister, Hortense. Madame Mancini became even more bitter against the unfortunate Marie, who, she decided, would always embarrass and trouble her relatives. Again she attempted to rid herself of this hapless creature. En-

couraged by the Cardinal, who lost no time in discovering how stubborn his niece was, she ordered her to enter a convent. Marie refused. The mother, exasperated, set out to wear down her resistance. She put her in a room apart from the others under the watch of an old waiting woman named Rose, who spied upon her every movement. All the while her sisters were free to come and go in society. Olympe was on the point of marrying the Count de Soissons and she took a cruel delight in telling the prisoner of her successes, and in describing the balls and fêtes from which she was excluded. At heart Marie was not ill-natured; Olympe was. Doubtless the latter's deliberate malice sowed seeds of spitefulness in the heart of the imprisoned girl which matured later.

At any rate, from this time on Marie detested her mother and her sisters, and they reciprocated in full measure. Her uncle mistrusted and disliked her. A charming family! Mazarin, however, could cope with any of them.

Furious at having to play the part of Cinderella, Marie swore that she would be avenged. The harder they pushed her, the greater was her resistance. Since they were holding her prisoner in this same Louvre where her sisters were displaying themselves in court dresses, very well! she too would participate in those festivities, but with the royal mantle upon her shoulders! She would be Queen and make all these women who now scorned her bow down before her. Her uncle persecuted her; she would have the King dismiss him. Her sister humiliated her with those stories of her successes; she would be avenged by stealing her lover! How did this unattractive girl hope to make such a conquest? She did not know.

But she had confidence in her intelligence and in her inflexible will. And she believed herself to be a woman of destiny.

As she was meditating her revenge, an adventuress who much resembled her passed stormily, like some ominous meteor, through the Court. This was Queen Christina of Sweden, who had given up her crown to avoid being dependent upon her husband, and had come to Paris as, of all the cities in the world, she thought it the one where women were allowed the greatest freedom. She had scandalized Brussels with her debauchery and had terrified the French Court by the murder of her lover, Monaldeschi. She showed the society of her day how men should be treated and proclaimed widely that she would live to suit herself, without regard for public opinion, customs, or even laws and morals. Marie, like everyone else, was greatly struck by the insolence of this revolt against convention. But no one else at Court was as well prepared as she to receive such lessons. She decided that she would never leave France and for the same reason as Queen Christina—because it was the land of freedom. She had, she writes, "an innate aversion to Italian customs and to life in Rome, where there is more hypocrisy and hatred between families than at any other Court." She too, like that monster in petticoats who had her unfaithful lovers stabbed, would "live her own life." To live her own life, to give way to the whim of the moment, to carry her pleasure and her caprices to the bitter end, without restriction or impediment of any sort, such was the intention of this mad woman. Her uncle had observed her closely and he feared her, thought her "a libertine and a wild and capricious woman." But, I repeat, at bottom she was

prompted to do what she did by a desire for freedom and her instinct for revolt. Her professed love for the King was only a means of getting what she wanted.

She wanted, therefore, to be Queen from ambition certainly, but for other reasons also, reasons so intimate that she could never have given voice to them. She began early and more or less deliberately to prepare herself for her role. Knowing how highly the King regarded intelligence and wit, she prepared to dazzle him. She studied eagerly. She devoured the fashionable poets and novelists. She read Montemayor's "L'Astrée" and his "Diana Enamorada." These romantic books turned her head. She became pedantic. After literature, she attacked philosophy. During her retirement at Brouage she took lessons in astrology from an Arabian doctor; she quoted Ovid and sought consolation in Seneca and Philostratus. Such preparation was not without its reward. This learned and ugly girl ended by attracting first the attention and then the love of the King. Her dream was about to come true; she would be Queen of France! So boundless was her pride that she was not even surprised. She thought herself born for great things. Her sisters, already brilliantly married, were like her in this. They took their elevation for granted. These "Mazarinettes," housed in the most beautiful mansions and palaces in France, were forerunners of Napoleon's sisters. Duchies and principalities, crowns and thrones, nothing was too magnificent for the imperious Italians.

Having achieved her end, or, at least, being on the verge of achieving it, Marie Mancini underwent a veritable transformation that even included her physical appearance. She became almost beautiful, at least in the eyes of

her lover. And it must be admitted that when she was born, her contemporaries agree that she was decidedly ugly. One of the authors of "La France Galante" pictures her as "small, fat, and ugly," with "the air of a barmaid." Judging by her portraits, she was all of that. Madame d'Aulnoy, however, who met her later in Madrid and is generous toward her, grants her some points. "She was very lovely," she writes, "though she no longer possessed the first bloom of youth. Her eyes sparkled and were lively and attractive; she had fine teeth and thick hair blacker than jet; her figure was good and she had perfect legs." All of which does not make her a Venus. These are, for the most part, qualities that are attributed to ill-favored people by way of consolation. There can be no question, however, but that she made up for this by her intellect and her wit—not that she was actually *spirituelle* in the French meaning of the word. Above all, she was intelligent, with a leaning towards pedantry. She had a quick, brilliant, trenchant and, consequently, somewhat disagreeable mind. Madame de Lafayette assures us that "there was no warmth or charm about her person and very little in her wit, although she had an abundance of it. She was bold, resolute, fiery, dissolute without manners or courtesy." This brazen, violent, undisciplined girl bears a strong resemblance to the "bar-maid," referred to above. The fact is that there seems to have been a good deal of the typical Italian exuberance and boisterousness about her. Hers was a rather crude nature, without subtlety and without sympathy.

Besides such striking failings as these, another one, less obvious but highly significant, soon showed itself. This

was an exaggerated amour-propre that made it impossible for her to become interested in anything but herself, her whims, or her ambitions. Her arrogance was unbearable. She was convinced that the world revolved around her. When she was triumphant it was because Providence had great things in store for her. When she suffered a reverse it was because a relentless fate pursued her. She was the child of misfortune; her father told her as much when he had her horoscope cast. Therefore she was under the constant necessity of dramatizing her life. Later this hysteria became unbelievably exaggerated; she lived in a frenzy of triumphs and of persecutions. She was impelled constantly to create scandal, to flout public opinion, to drive the chancelleries wild, to turn the heads of ministers and monarchs, to put ambassadors and papal nuncios at odds one with another, and in general to stir up trouble. She continued doing so until she was an old woman. For half a century she was constantly before the eyes of Europe, always racked by excitement, always intriguing, uncovering plots, organizing them herself, an incorrigible mischiefmaker, throwing herself gaily into impossible adventures, glorying in her pranks with complete lack of moral sense. Her hypersensitiveness caused her continuous suffering; as a result she had an unhealthy desire to make others suffer in their turn, to make those about her unhappy. She ended by being a sadist. Yet at heart she was not malicious. She merely obeyed a fiendish impulse to avenge herself for what she had suffered. In the end she became insufferable. Her uncle, the Cardinal, who knew her only when she was young, appraised her correctly and warned the King of her failings. But he could

not guess to what lengths her mad ambition, her lack of balance, her passion for adventure, and her mania for domineering would drive this fantastic girl.

For after all the great concern of this perpetual wanderer was "to live her own life." She was an assiduous attendant at the Carnivals of Venice. Masked, floating in her gondola, she pursued gallant adventures which continually escaped her. At Madrid disguised *en tapada,* a white mantilla drawn over her eyes, she roamed through the Prado at night, accosting passing cavaliers. By day she drove about town, pestering people with her calls, pushing past the most forbidding doors, wearing a ball gown under her religious cloak. In Switzerland, in Germany, in Belgium, she was forever on the highway, on horseback, or in a post chaise, leaving an inn to go to a Palace, or, as in Brussels, sleeping in a church to avoid being taken to a convent. She was a married woman, but she hated her husband, even though she admitted that he had given her no cause for so doing. Constable Colonna, whom they forced her to marry after her adventure with Louis XIV, seems to have been a good man and greatly in love with his wife. "He was a very decent man," she writes, "very much of a gentleman; he sought in every way to please me!" Notwithstanding, she admitted that she made him very unhappy. This Neapolitan gentleman, interested only in his estate and his stud, seemed to her to be coarse and without affection or sensitiveness. He was a fine husband, but presented her with too many children. She had four by him. After a miscarriage she declared that this lusty husband would kill her in the end, and henceforth she refused obstinately to resume conjugal relations. With the excuse that she must protect herself

from his importunities, she fled from Rome, accompanied by her sister, Hortense, Duchess of Mazarin, who also bewailed her unhappy marriage. After undergoing extreme danger on the fishing boat in which they had fled, the two fugitives landed in France.

The truth is that throughout her life, Marie was inconsolable at the thought that through her own fault she had lost the King's love and had missed becoming Queen of France. She was ready to look for adventure once more. Was she not foredoomed? Had it not been prophesied that she would be "the cause of much evil?" She was determined to pursue her fate to the bitter end. Already this fatal woman had become a romantic heroine.

It is really difficult to explain how the usually rational, calm, and well-balanced King could have fallen in love with this extravagant creature who was ceaselessly active and seething with whims and fancies.

He must have been more carried away by sensual desire than appears at first sight. There must have been a fire in Marie's eyes capable of arousing the most frigid of men. Also Louis XIV at eighteen—as we have already seen—was something of a snob. He had not yet attained the assurance that resulted from the consciousness of his own superiority. He had a naïve admiration for talent and accomplishments in others that he thought he himself lacked. This overgrown boy whose interests had so far been confined to horses and dogs entered with wonder and a sort of timid respect into the world crystallized by the ladies of the Hôtel Rambouillet in which homage was paid polished conversations, eloquence, poetry, and the various affected niceties of wit and sensibility. It was a world in

which Marie and her sisters were preëminently fitted to hold sway as queens. The young man took pleasure in exchanging carefully chosen phrases with the niece of His Eminence. Before long it had become a steady and pleasant companionship passed in reading books together, writing love notes and paying each other a thousand trivial attentions. Together they pored over the Map of Love. In the evening in the Queen's apartment Louis would go into raptures of delight at the sound of his friend's voice as, with shining eyes, she would recite a passage from Corneille or some romantic and pathetic scene from "Cyrus" or "Clélie." Intoxicated, he surrendered himself to the charms of this foreign girl, this passionate Italian who wafted him into such enchanted regions. Hand in hand they would re-live the romances that they read together, imitate characters, and reënact situations. They quaffed long draughts of the poison of literature. Their lives became a repetition of episodes in the books they read. And, conversely, these books had only to set down life at Court, as it was, with its ballets, its tournaments, its games, receptions, and fêtes to exhibit to the fascinated readers what a charming existence was their everyday life.

At first the King's love for his new friend was solely platonic; it was the stilted love so fashionable in those days, the one and only love before which all other forms were deemed contemptible. To these perfect lovers marriage was a silly affair, a rather ridiculous accident which it was best to avoid, if possible. As the Cathos and Madelons of those days put it, marriage attracts attention to unspeakably low things. Marriage is the death of love. When one is married, one loses love. Nothing in life really matters except high ideals and beautiful sentiments. Love

PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV

By F. de Troy. After an engraving by P. Drevet

thus conceived is a continual exaltation of mind and of heart, an infinitely decorative state, which holds sway from afar over the petty trivialities of life—it is wholly a matter of intellect, it is intellect itself. Amid the indolence of life at Court, it became the predominantly fashionable interest.

Swept into such a mysterious love by this enthusiastic and passionate creature with shining eyes and vibrant voice, the discreet but sensual young King threw himself headlong into the pursuit of the mirages of these romantic lands. He had but to recall some of the things he had read as a child to abandon himself to this charming dream. One of the first books that was given him was a chivalrous and sentimental didactic novel entitled, "Discours des Divertissements, inclinations et perfections royales," written by a certain Potier de Morais. It was the story of Prince Alcimedes who, when hunting one day in the forest of Mirtres, "that place so perfect for love making," met the beautiful Amelite who was also hunting. The hunter falls prey to the huntress. Early in the novel one reads the following words, destined for the instruction of the young King. "*The perfect Prince should love and be loved.* Virtuous love endows an individual with many rare qualities. . . . Passion is no more than a manifestation of inner spiritual light which illumines the path of the lovers." The reader may judge whether or not La Vallière's future lover was the man to hearken to this call to love. The rest of the story is a succession of melodramatic events, each more heroic and marvellous than the last. There are duels, abductions, clandestine raids. The novels which the two lovers had read since their meeting were of this type, filled with exciting pursuits on horseback, hunt-

ing scenes, combats with giants and dragons, the abduction of the heroine, the sworn fidelity of lovers, names carved in the bark of oak trees, the echo in the valley that repeats the name of the missing lover. The submissive, fascinated pupil of Marie Mancini was carried away by such marvellous events. Thanks to her all these things would come true.

The first phase of their love was, therefore, purely romantic. The King's great ambition, like that of the heroes in these novels was to distinguish himself in the eyes of his lady. During the summer of 1657 at the siege of Montmédy he seized every opportunity to perform great exploits, with the obvious hope of dazzling Marie. She was beside herself with joy and pride. "The King," she wrote, "exhibited the most astounding bravery when he inspected the army; without thought of danger, he went much further toward the enemy's lines than he should, showing how little he cared for danger and setting a good example for the soldiers. When the story was told in my presence I could not conceal my joy, although it was mixed with uneasiness; the King was gracious enough to tell me that he would have done still more for the pleasure of seeing my eyes shine so." A charming picture! There is another story, somewhat later than this, which shows us how far the King carried his amorous gestures. "It happened," says Marie, "if I remember correctly, at Bois le Viconte, as we were walking rather quickly down a path lined with trees. His Majesty had offered me his arm when my hand struck the hilt of his sword, albeit quite lightly. Instantly in a charming burst of rage he drew it from the scabbard and hurled it from him with an indescribable gesture." These two sketches give us an ex-

act picture of the King's feelings for Marie Mancini during the first phase of their love. His attitude was one of glorified gallantry with just the touch of the vanity that we have already noted.

During the winter following this campaign there were numerous fêtes both in town and at Court. The King, a fine dancer and a handsome cavalier, shone especially brilliantly at the balls and ballets. This doubtless served to change Marie, who had at first been prompted solely by ambition, and caused her to fall definitely in love with the King. But even so, ambition retained the upper hand. She wished to become Queen, to humiliate the Cardinal, who was harsh to her, to humiliate Olympe and Hortense who were too proud of the fine marriages that the one had made and the other was about to make. In short, Cinderella wanted revenge upon her sisters.

During the summer of 1658 a crucial event greatly changed the relations between the two. After the battle of the Dunes, the King fell ill at Calais. It was not the fault of his physicians that he did not die. Already at Court they were beginning to make much of the Duke of Anjou, only brother of the King and heir presumptive to the throne. It is not difficult to imagine the agonies that Marie Mancini went through during this period. The Prince dead, her whole dream would have crashed to earth. She suffered the most frightful tortures. Throughout the period of her lover's danger she "pined away crying," as the Grande Mademoiselle put it. When the young King recovered he learned of Marie's grief. He considered it proof of an affection and a love stronger than death. He always wanted above all else to be able to have absolute confidence in someone; all through his life and

in many other love affairs he cherished that hope. He loved this violent, ugly girl because he felt that he could trust her blindly. This was perhaps the most glorious moment of their love. Toward the end of the summer and all through the autumn they were constantly in each other's company at Fontainebleau. There were frequent excursions into the forest, ballets and balls at the Château, walks by torch light along the grand canal, suppers on the water to the accompaniment of the music of violins. More than once, like the heroes in their beloved novels, the two lovers wandered deep into the thickets and carved their initials on beech trees.

Then suddenly came the catastrophe, the result, of course, of plans that had been carefully laid. The occasion was the King's trip to Lyons. According to rumor, a marriage was being negotiated between the King and the Princess Marguerite of Savoy. This manœuvre was only one of the Cardinal's schemes to stir up the jealousy of the Spanish and to get them to offer the Infanta as the King's bride. It is more than probable that, at the bottom of his heart, Louis found no difficulty in reconciling his love for Marie with the political necessity that forced him into such a marriage. As in the novels, love and marriage seemed to him quite different matters. Marie thought otherwise. She was bent on marrying the King. When this Savoyard marriage seemed on the verge of being concluded, she could not conceal her vexation. "What!" she asked him, "wouldn't you be ashamed to marry such an ugly woman?" Without realizing it, she was playing into the hands of the Infanta. But the negotiations for the marriage with the Princess of Savoy were broken off.

The passion of the two lovers flamed forth again. Dur-

ing the rest of their stay at Lyons they were inseparable. Every night the King escorted the young girl back to her abode. They walked together by moonlight in the Place Bellecourt, or drove along the banks of the Saône. The King's gallantry was such that he even acted as coachman for his mistress. They pledged their undying love. Marie was triumphant; she was sure to become Queen of France. Her lover had given her his royal word. And he was sincere at such moments, as he was to the end of their relationship. If it had been left to him, undoubtedly he would have married Marie Mancini. He had no class prejudices. He was essentially the most democratic of men, since to his eyes the rest of the world was jumbled into a hazy mass of mediocrity. Moreover he still possessed the reckless spirit of early youth; he permitted no obstacle to hinder the course of his passion, no restrictions on his pleasure. When she was at the Louvre, the Queen of Sweden had advised him badly. Seeing him in love with the Italian girl, she had said, "Marry someone you love." As he was madly in love with Marie he found that a natural thing to do.

It was time to extricate him from this situation. Negotiations for the Spanish marriage had begun immediately upon the departure of the Princess of Savoy. The Cardinal and the Queen-Mother, both of whom were anxious to arrange the match, vetoed the plans of the two lovers. Mazarin knew that his niece disliked him and did not want her to be Queen; Anne of Austria, at heart still Spanish, saw no other way to end the war between Spain and France unless by the marriage of her son to the Infanta. They pointed out to the King that if he were to marry a private individual and a foreigner like Marie

Mancini, he would lay himself open to mockery in every Court in Europe; he would seriously impair the prestige of France, would stir up an insurrection in France similar to the Fronde, would give the Princes an excuse for reviving their intrigues, and, finally, he would insult Spain and prolong a war that was weighing heavily upon the people of the two countries. And so the unhappy lover found two nations erecting a barricade between him and his love. He was too good a statesman not to realize the validity of these arguments and the impossibility of the plans he had so foolishly undertaken. In spite of appearances to the contrary, he saw all this full well. Henceforth deep down within him he knew that he would not marry Marie. The lover in him, however, did not surrender. He made it a point of honor to hold out against the Cardinal and his mother. He did allow them to extract from him a promise to marry the Infanta. But knowing that the arrogance and the dilatory habits of the Spanish would put a thousand difficulties in the way of the marriage, he was confident that it would never take place. It is curious and yet characteristic of him that he should give his word twice in this way. He should not be accused of deceit or of trickery. He was submitting to the inevitable when he consented to the Spanish marriage, but at the same time he was confident that this marriage was out of the question and so he would have been able to keep his word to Marie.

When at last, heartbroken, he had to marry the Infanta and give up his dream of love, the deepest, the most sincere, it might even be called the only real attachment of his life, he still kept his heart for his lover. For years he sought to renew their relations until ultimately he saw

her as she was, and became convinced that all along she had been inspired solely by ambition, and had wished for nothing but his crown.

Even then he made it a point of royal pride not to admit the truth. To the end, perhaps until his last breath, he retained his reverence for her, his first, his only love. Despite their disagreements, he continued to treat her with the greatest consideration even after she had become the wife of the Constable Colonna. He conducted her to her chair as if she were a foreign princess and called her "my cousin." When she left for Italy, he saw her to her carriage. "He sighed, without uttering a word," reports an eye witness, "and in his parting salute bowed deeply before the carriage door, as if she had been a princess. She shed a few tears and the carriage disappeared."

Thus ended the King's romance—as chaste a romance—if such it were—as a youth's first dream of love. When her stern husband received her, he was astonished to discover that this girl, so sophisticated, so far from ingenuous, was still a virgin. "Monsieur le Connétable," wrote her sister, Hortense, "did not believe that the love affairs of Kings could be innocent. He was so pleased to discover that he was wrong in my sister's case that he did not mind in the least that he had not been the first to win her heart." If this is true, those long conversations at the Louvre, those unaccompanied excursions on the road to Lyons, and in the forest at Fontainebleau, were purely platonic; theirs was another example of the inexhaustible pleasure to be derived by two young lovers from the repetition of their passionate declarations of affection.

Apparently the King was never again really in love.

What he had loved in Marie had been her wit, her intelligence, and her devotion. She had cruelly opened his eyes. Never again did he have confidence in the devotion or in the sincerity of the love of his mistresses. And yet he was always ready to believe in them; it was for that reason that he became so fond of La Vallière. But he let her love him much more than he loved her. Although that was true, he still tried because of instinctive generosity to put sincerity into even the most passing of his attachments. He was always given to exalted sentiments, tears, emotional and melodramatic scenes. This was in memory of Marie. His experience with her taught him an important lesson; he seldom forgot it afterwards. Kings, he learned, are far from being able to do what they please. They belong to the State; to it they must sacrifice not only their lives, but also their hearts.

Several years later Louis XIV had an especially dramatic reminder of this terrible sacrifice. Just as Mazarin and his mother had broken his heart for political reasons, he, for the same reason, broke that of his cousin, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, when he forbade her marriage to Lauzun. He repeated to her what he himself had been told, that "the public" was opposed to the marriage. He paced the room crying out, "Kings should please the public." There was nothing for the poor lady to do but to forget her love. But alas, Louis knew by experience the grief that such an action entailed. The poor girl fell to her knees imploring him, "Sire, it would be better if you killed me than to put me in such a position!" Overcome, he dropped to his knees beside her and kissed her. "For a long time," she writes, "we were locked in this embrace, with his cheek against mine; he wept as bitterly as I!"

What a touching scene! The King in tears on his knees, cheek to cheek with a disconsolate lover whom he is attempting to console! And it was Marie, the "barmaid," who had unwittingly tapped this emotional spring in the heart of the young King.

CHAPTER IV

THE KING'S SECRET

HE IS twenty-two years old, and has long since been crowned. His Prime Minister has just died. The example of the Cardinal, even more than his formal instructions, has shown him how to handle men, and how to carry through a sustained political programme. His tragic love for Marie Mancini has tested his mettle. The stage is set for him to do something. What will it be?

For some time he has been asking himself the same question. Later, in his "Mémoires," he wondered whether he made a mistake in not assuming the administration of the State at once. "If it was a mistake," he told his son, "I have done my best to atone for it; and I can assure you, without qualification, that it was due neither to carelessness nor to laxity. From childhood, the mere mention in my presence of the 'Do-nothing Kings' and the Mayors of the Palace was painful to me." He adds that *in his heart he preferred fame to everything else, even to life itself*. "But you should know," he says, "that my first steps, those which were either to lay the foundations for that fame or make it forever impossible, were aided and hindered in almost equal degree by this self-same desire

for glory. *However, I first tested myself in secret* without taking anyone into my confidence. I thought out for myself the problems brought up by various events; I was full of hope and joy when I found that *sometimes* my first reactions or my conclusions coincided with those of skilled and experienced men. At heart I was sure that I had not been placed and kept upon the throne, that I could not have such a deep desire to do good, unless I possessed the means necessary to do so. . . . Finally after several years had passed by in this manner, the general peace, my marriage and the death of Mazarin forced me to assume the task which I had so long both longed for and feared."

Note once again his modesty. The King was far from believing that he was born to govern without first learning how, or that conducting the government was an easy matter. It was with fear and misgiving that he assumed control. Yet he did not hesitate to take the step. The nation had besought him to rule alone. He desired, therefore, to have no Prime Minister. Resolutely he proclaimed his decision to his attendants. At first no one believed him. Even the Queen-Mother (proving thereby how little she knew her son) claimed that this laudable enthusiasm would prove to be only a flash in the pan. Already the best informed courtiers spread the rumor that the Cardinal de Retz, then in exile, would be Mazarin's successor. But before that happened, they claimed, the King would appoint him ambassador to the Vatican. To put an end to these rumors, Louis XIV at once demanded the Cardinal's resignation as Archbishop of Paris and immediately appointed his successor. Moreover, he forbade him to come into the vicinity of Paris. Hence-

forth no one denied that the era of ecclesiastical Prime Ministers had come to an end.

For a young man of twenty-two to make such a decision showed a courage that is not sufficiently appreciated today. Under the old regime Prime Ministers were saddled with the responsibility for all unpopular decisions and mistakes made by a government. They acted as buffers between the King and his people. Several times Louis XIII had to throw upon Richelieu the responsibility for measures which either the people or the nobles disliked but which he himself secretly approved. His son, therefore, showed great courage in thus boldly exposing himself to the hatred and the anger of the people, and in accepting personally all responsibility.

Here we have him, then, settling down voluntarily to his task. "I began," he says, "by glancing rapidly over the various governmental departments—not casually, *but with the eye of a responsible master.* I was impressed by the discovery that there was not one of them that was not in imperative need of my personal attention." Before doing anything else, he examined his own conscience, he looked into himself—for on himself, he knew, everything depended. Exactly what was he?

He was King—that is to say, an extraordinary being—an intermediary between men and God, and he was entrusted with divine authority. The Parlementarians, the Protestants themselves (out of opposition to the Pope) maintained that his authority derived directly from God and that no power could release his subjects from the allegiance they owed him. They called him "a living Christ," an "adorable master." All that is forgotten when Louis XIV is accused of arrogance. His detractors

forget that a belief in all that was demanded of him by the nation that he might be a bulwark against the Pope, who claimed the same prerogatives. Like the Pope and like the bishops, he too was a priest and had his sacred vocation.

It is to be remembered that after receiving the royal unction at the time of his coronation he was clothed in tunic, dalmatic, and mantle, representing "the vestments of a deacon and sub-deacon and the chasuble of a priest." Like Christ, he performed miracles, cured the scrofulous and healed the sick. He was weighed down by appalling responsibilities. Twenty-five million subjects relied upon him not merely for their livelihood, but for happiness and life itself. He was even more the father than the master. The coronation liturgy specified both his titles and his obligations. Louis recalled vividly one of the most impressive rites of the ceremony. The presiding bishop, the Duke de Laon, placed a ring on his finger "*to wed him to France.*" This nuptial rite, according to a contemporary, was "symbolic of the binding union of our Kings with the State; as a husband loves only his wife, so our monarchs declare that they will cherish their subjects and grant them protection."

No French King ever took the symbol of this ceremony more seriously. Louis XIV like his predecessors, had been wedded to France before the altar at Rheims. Among the items of expense for the coronation, specific mention is made of "the diamond for the marriage to France." So low were the funds in the treasury at this time that it was necessary to borrow a ring from Anne of Austria—it was returned to her immediately after the ceremony. The lover of La Vallière, the husband of the Infanta, "daugh-

ter of the greatest King in the world," never forgot this mystic marriage performed to the sound of triumphal trumpets in the marvellous basilica, filled with flying doves released under the high arches, giving the impression that the sculptural seraphim had suddenly spread their wings and taken flight. Henceforth he was pledged to France by this beautiful and brilliant diamond. What mattered his mistresses and his earthly spouse! It was to France, his spouse of glory, that he had given his heart. What would the young bridegroom, in the full vigor of his youth, do for his beloved Bride, so exacting and so formidable?

With "the assurance of a master" and the tenderness of a lover, he examined conditions in France and in the rest of the world. Despite a long succession of victories and the recent favorable treaty of the Pyrenees, the condition of France, indeed, that of all Europe, seemed precarious. People in general felt that the peace was merely a truce and that it might be shattered at any moment. As for France, the important problem that for two centuries had directed her foreign policy was still unsolved. To the north and the east her frontier was unprotected and her capital ever in danger. In the south we had acquired Roussillon, Conflent, and Cerdagne, but the country was infested with agents of His Catholic Majesty, and both nobles and peasants were conspiring against France. Franche-Comté, like Flanders, still belonged to Spain, and, like Flanders, it was a net-work of plots and of anti-French propaganda. Alsace was ours in name only; and we had no title at all to Strasbourg. Lorraine was still under the vacillating and impulsive Duke, Charles IV; to be sure he had been shorn of his power, but not long before, as the King had not forgotten, he had led an army

to the very walls of Paris. Even though disarmed, from his retreat in Nancy he was constantly negotiating with Germany to recover full possession of his State.

To the north, we did not even occupy all of Artois. We possessed neither Dunkirk, Lille, nor the principal cities in Flanders. The towns we had captured in this district were little more than outposts for a later attack. These important facts are always overlooked when Louis XIV is accused of being inordinately ambitious. In reality, he was faced with the necessity of defending insecure conquests which had always been disputed and which he must complete in order to assure the peace and security of the nation. When he took it over, far from having been brought to a successful conclusion, the hardest part of the task was yet to be accomplished; it was for him to extend the French conquests in order to preserve what had already been acquired. He says this expressly in his "Mémoires." From the beginning he had striven, "to impress his new subjects both with his power and his consideration for them and to live down the traditional reputation of the French of being able to conquer but of being unable to retain what they had conquered."

Doubtless for the moment everything seemed calm. The Emperor was busy with the Turks; England, in the midst of a revolution, was for the time being our ally—a mercenary and unreliable ally. But Spain, for a century our most formidable enemy, was not appeased. She was not reconciled to the treaty of the Pyrenees which, although it was advantageous to us, represented no brilliant victory. She was constantly stirring up trouble along the border, stopping our messengers, annoying our business men, and interfering with our privateers. At

every Court her diplomats were working against us. Lastly, she was still the richest nation in the world and could, if she wished, hire troops with which to fight us. The Spanish and the French both frankly avowed this antagonism. It was a fight to the finish. One or the other must give way. Before resuming the fight with cannon, there was an unremitting struggle in which the weapons were epigrams, propaganda, and caricatures. The situation was somewhat the same as that between France and Germany before 1914. The French still had bitter memories of the captivity of Francis I at Madrid. They felt that they must still wipe out that humiliation; in the period following the treaties of Munster and of the Pyrenees they were still confident that the war of revenge against Spain was not over.

Louis XIV shared the impatient desire of his subjects to put an end to the arrogance of his neighbors. He was all the more conscious of it because of the mortification and humiliation he had suffered from the Spanish at his marriage. Lastly, from childhood he had been constantly annoyed by his mother's ceaseless boasting about her country and her family. He came to detest his uncle, His Catholic Majesty, and all the subjects of this conceited monarch. In this connection, his cousin, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, recounts a curious and amusing anecdote. It happened during the King's trip to Lyons, before there was any question of his marriage to the Infanta. "Before returning to his carriage, the King and the Queen began to discuss the relative greatness of the House of France and that of Austria. He remarked to me:

" 'The other day the Queen and I had a squabble about the relative greatness of our Houses.'

"The Queen said to us: 'That's true! But how can you endure the eminence you ascribe to yourself?'

"At that the King answered: 'I am well seconded for my cousin is as proud as I am!'

"The Queen then remarked: 'You are both equally glorious!'

"I started to laugh. The King turned to me and said: 'Is it not true, cousin, that the members of the House of Austria were only Counts of Hapsburg, when our family were Kings of France?'

"I answered that it was not my place to say and that it was difficult to discuss such matters; that the House of Austria was great and illustrious, but that it must give precedence to ours. The King then said:

" 'If the King of Spain and I were to have an argument I should make him give in to me. *How happy I would be if he would fight me in person to bring the war to a conclusion!* But he would take care not to; the men of that family never fight. Charles V would never oppose Francis I, who kept urging him to do so!' The King continued in the most pleasant manner with a thousand stories of that sort. But the Queen interrupted:

" 'Although all this is in fun, it is not right that you should wish to fight my brother. This topic displeases me. Let us speak of something else!' "

And yet Louis XIV was supposed to know nothing of history! He knew at least that one of his most illustrious predecessors had been insulted and was still to be avenged. At any rate such incidents as these (and there are many

others like them) are worth reflecting upon when we attempt to decide to what extent Louis XIV was a national King and in how much the glory that he sought was also the glory of his country.

Glory. What poet refers to it with more emotion, more fervor, than he. The famous passage in his "Mémoires" is known to all. "The love of glory entails the same nicety of handling and it might be said, the same timidity as the more tender passions. . . . The more eager I was to distinguish myself, the more fearful I was lest I fail; since I regarded the slightest mistake as a great disaster, in all that I did I was anxious to take every precaution." Here we have what really lies at the bottom of the King's mind at this time—"to take every precaution." Eager as he was to start things moving, to obey the desires of the nation, to quench his thirst for glory, and to vent his personal grievances, he did not wish to launch France upon any ill-considered enterprise. Moreover after almost half a century of war the country needed a rest, however much it may have desired to put an end to the Spanish threat. For this reason the King held his peace for some time. His most pressing duty as he saw it was to relieve the burden of his people. "Of all the things," he tells us, "that I noted in my private summary of conditions (both within and outside of my State), nothing struck either my mind or my heart more forcefully than the state of exhaustion of my subjects, who had been called upon to bear such immense burdens. . . . Therefore I lost no time in cutting down the taxes for the coming year by three millions, being persuaded that there was no better means of enriching myself than by saving my subjects from the ruin that was so nearly engulfing them."

IDEALIZED PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV
Superintending the construction of border fortifications

The first thought of this man, so often described as a pitiless tyrant, was, therefore, to lighten the burden of his subjects. The paramount duty of a sovereign is, however, to look to their security and, as far as possible, their prosperity; and to do that another war was inevitable. He could not prepare for it too far ahead. Hence he started at once to store up money and to prepare his troops for war; but he did it quietly and without alarming the enemy. If the enterprise was to succeed, it must be shrouded in secrecy until the last moment. Consequently the King attempted to disguise his belligerent projects under an air of frivolity. Those not privy to his secret thought that he was devoting his whole energy to flirtations, to his mistresses, his horses and dogs, military reviews, balls and ballets, open air fêtes and fireworks. In reality at this time a thousand plans were taking shape in his head.

This rôle, however, suited him perfectly. He was born with a taste for luxury and pleasure. He loved display, luxurious surroundings, buildings, and all the beautiful things of this life. He intended to enjoy life, all of life as a sovereign in those days could if he had a feeling for beauty and grandeur and a taste for all that is delightful. He remembered the Cardinal's lessons and the romantic novels he and Marie Mancini had read together. But he guarded his secret jealously and reserved the future for other things. For the time being he lived for pleasure, for riches, for splendor, while he awaited the moment when he might live for glory.

PART THREE

LIFE FOR PLEASURE

"*The King would have sacrificed all of his women for Versailles.*"—Correspondence of Bussy-Rabutin.

CHAPTER I

LOUIS MAKES HIS PROGRAMME

THOSE pious people who, at the beginning of Louis XIV's reign, had hoped so desperately that this descendant of Saint Louis would model his conduct after that of his illustrious ancestor, were destined to be sadly disappointed by the ultimate course of events. To be sure no one was more worthy of the title, Most Christian Majesty, than Anne of Austria's son. His piety was deep and sincere. It is none the less true that he quite lacked the qualities of a Saint Louis. There is almost no resemblance between them. They were not built on the same plan. In the first place the thoughts of Louis XIV seldom turned toward Heaven. He possessed in the highest degree what Nietzsche calls "the wisdom of the world." No other sovereign has been so sure that his kingdom was of this world and of no other.

It was precisely for this reason that, from the day he took over the helm, this pleasure-loving man, this lover of grandeur, fine buildings, and all the good things of this world, set out deliberately to extract from the world, and especially from his own kingdom, what riches and joys he could find. One should beware of hastily styling him selfish merely for this reason. Above all else he desired

riches and material happiness for his subjects. Never did this superman distinguish between his own destiny and that of the State. In a tapestry designed for him by Lebrun in which is pictured the symbolic figure of Summer surrounded by the various fruits and agricultural products, may be read the following motto: "*Vitæ melioris in usum*"—"to the service of a better life." The King desired this better life for his entire kingdom; he would have made life delightful for his subjects as for himself. That such was his secret desire and his express purpose is apparent, not merely from his own actions, but from all we can learn about his ideas, from the declarations of contemporary writers and statesmen, and from the symbolic and allegorical representations of artists.

From among a multitude of contemporary remarks, these lines from the pen of honest André Félibien, one of the men best acquainted with the Louis XIV of the fêtes and the gorgeous entertainments, are well worth pondering. After explaining the symbolic figures in the tapestry depicting Summer, he concludes, "*in the same way His Majesty was given to France to make her subjects happier than they have ever been before.*"

In the hopes of achieving this dream of happiness, he had early in his reign worked out a comprehensive plan of action. Taine, when he wished to give a striking example of the grasp and capacity of Napoleon's brain, pictured it as an enormous folio, which he termed "the atlas of Napoleon." It was a vast catalogue of the concrete knowledge, abstract ideas and plans accumulated by this mighty intellect. A similar atlas might be compiled for Louis XIV. The King's curiosity, his desire to know

everything, the breadth of his personal experience, the profoundness of his knowledge of every department of the government and lastly his constant intelligent collaboration with the most gifted specialists in all fields—all these things enable us to make out a very extensive "atlas" of Louis XIV. All subjects flowed through his mind just as all governmental affairs were centralized in his offices. His experience and his understanding were undoubtedly even broader than Napoleon's. The latter knew practically nothing about art of literature, while Louis XIV was perfectly at home in both fields. Was he really "monarch in the realm of fine diction," as the Abbé de Choisy asserted? One must have heard him to judge. It is certain, at least, that he was the foremost lover of art and connoisseur, if not actually the foremost artist, of his age.

In that "rapid glance over the various divisions of the State" which he made immediately after Mazarin's death and which he has recorded in his "Mémoires," he mapped out, at least roughly, a general plan of reforms and innovations. His first interest—as we know—was in increasing the wealth and prosperity of his subjects. Obstacles of all sorts, foremost among which was the necessity for engaging in another war, forced him to restrict and even, at times, to abandon the execution of this plan. But it may be truly said that, standing before the window of his room in the Louvre, looking out upon the lovely river framed by magnificent buildings and casting his eye over the wharves piled high with goods brought from every province in the kingdom and from every land in the world, his first thoughts were of how he would make the lives of his subjects and his own life an endless festival.

First of all it was necessary to coax France to become rich. In accomplishing this task Louis XIV and his minister Colbert coöperated perfectly. They had to impress the French with the actual and potential wealth of the country. The King knew his kingdom thoroughly; he had travelled through it from end to end, not once but often; he did not abandon these trips until forced to do so by old age. No ruler of France at any period of her history has ever known the country as Louis XIV did. He knew personally how fertile was her soil, how great her wealth in men and natural resources. At this time, France was the most densely populated and intensively cultivated country in Europe. Foreigners were amazed by it. To equal Spain, who possessed more gold, Louis saw that he must retain in France what currency was already there and to draw in that of the neighboring countries.

He profited greatly by the efforts of successive statesmen to bring about real unity within the country. This unity was the great strength of the nation; it aroused the admiration and envy of foreigners even more than did the country's fertility. Moreover he was leader of a generation of unequalled great soldiers, administrators, scholars, writers, artists, and craftsmen. The new generation asked nothing better than a chance to distinguish itself in the eyes of a young master who shared its hopes and illusions. His understanding sympathy and his prestige were at the beck of his brilliant subjects. After the King's marriage, France, victorious at last after being threatened by the direst of catastrophes, experienced a rebirth, and went through a period of exuberant, youthful intoxication. Young men were proud of their youth. With the aid by his painters and sculptors, Louis XIV

filled his gardens and palaces with images of youth and even of childhood, symbol of fertility. He wanted youth to be in evidence everywhere at Versailles. The entire nation coöperated with him. They realized that a long future was opening before them, that they were preparing methods of conquest unknown to previous generations. They arrogantly compared themselves to the Greeks and Romans, whose civilization, undoubtedly exaggerated, pedants still praised out of habit. Deliriously they proclaimed themselves "modern." Complacently would they catalogue the recent inventions and discoveries which had increased tenfold the power of man, widened his field of knowledge, and added to his happiness—the mariner's compass, gunpowder, clocks, mirrors, the telescope and the microscope, all kinds of machines; the new countries opened to commercial enterprise as well as to the curiosity and observation of moralists and philosophers, such as India, China, Japan, and the two Americas; and finally the renaissance or the creation anew of science, and in art the search for poetry and eloquence through new channels. If the ancients had been inventive, so too were they, and more so. Not only would they outstrip the ancients, but all foreigners as well. In the cultivation of pleasure and beauty, in fashion and in the refinement of life they would eclipse Spain and Italy, the two countries which had hitherto showed the way to the rest of Europe.

They possessed an intellectual exuberance, a lusty appreciation of invention and novelty which prepared the way for the succeeding encyclopædic age; but they possessed an even more national, more French, more deeply Christian characteristic. These inaugurators of new methods were in no sense of the word revolutionists.

They thought highly of the earth, yet did not deny the existence of Heaven; they achieved a balance btween intelligence and faith, between the practical and the mystical instincts in our people that has never since been equalled.

Louis XIV, a national leader if ever there was one, was keenly conscious of this excitement, of this impetuous spurt for wealth and glory. He himself felt the same impulses. With such a kingdom and such a people it would have been unpardonable had he not done great things. He recalls La Porte, his kindly valet who, when he was small, had read de Mézeray to him, and had asked, "Sire, do you wish to be a 'Do-nothing King?' " No, no! Never would he be lazy. Exacting the greatest effort from himself, he was indefatigable in stimulating and arousing the nation as a whole. Never has France been subjected to such a stimulating and intensive course of training.

The main points in the King's programme are well known. He planned to intensify the cultivation of the naturally fertile soil, and to the crops already grown to add those heretofore grown only outside of France; to bring in from foreign countries the various plants and spices that France lacked, such as tea, coffee, quinine, chocolate, and also such products as porcelains, bronzes, lacquers and rugs from the Orient and China. Later they would imitate these things and produce them themselves, and afterwards, turning to various foreign countries, they would "pluck" in the words of the Venetian ambassador, "the choicest of the world's flowers." Thus would they become wealthy, and, little by little, life in France would be led on the most magnificent scale ever known.

As early as 1664, with the presentation of the Festivals of the Enchanted Isle, at Versailles, the King had given the Court an illustration of this gorgeous dream. In the gardens of the palace he gave an open air banquet at which an astonishing variety of gastronomic delicacies were served in rare and costly dishes, masterpieces of the goldsmith's art. Below the engraving that pictures this sumptuous rustic banquet, one reads: "*A Feast for the King and the Queens at which were served all the delicacies offered to man by the Gods and the Four Seasons.*" Everything was there that would add to the pleasure of the King and his guests. And truly "they plucked the choicest of the world's flowers"; they were served by the gods themselves who descended expressly from Olympus to do them honor.

Life on such a scale entails room for expansion, it must be more in the open. And so the old France was, as it were, aired out and its windows thrown open to the world, its perspectives lengthened. Gardens and parks were developed with delightful vistas stretching to the horizon. Inside, everything was neater and more convenient. This younger generation, eager for new pleasures and an elegance heretofore unknown, was no longer satisfied with the "good soup" of Molière's simple-minded Chrysale. Later these innovations were to be carried out on a lavish scale and then indeed life was to become supremely elegant and pleasant.

For the first time the French realized the beauties of their own landscape, so much richer, subtler, and more varied than that of Italy. Moreover they had an abundance of building stone, marble, and wood. They decided to make use of these natural resources, and of their

splendid forests, noble rivers, and temperate climate in the creation of a new art and in changing the whole aspect of the country. If Italy had her palaces, France would have a multitude of chateaux. She would devote herself especially to the creation of large decorative groups. The cramped mediæval towns were to assume a monumental appearance. For this wholesale rebuilding and redecorating of the country, this general mastering of all the forces that contribute to the embellishment and the beauty of life, they enlisted the aid of a host of artists and craftsmen who asked nothing better than to be allowed to work under a master as fond as they of all that is beautiful.

These artists and craftsmen were gathered together in new guilds, which were less restricted and freer of access than ever before; they were assured the material comforts of life, and their calling assumed a new dignity in their own eyes and in that of the public. There were Royal Academies of Music, Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, as well as studios at the Louvre, Saint Germain, Versailles and Marly where, all through the reign of Louis XIV, craftsmen were busily engaged in the production of various sorts of ornaments and decorations. This official recognition of artists was not an empty formality, as today. These artists were collaborating with the King, and he with them. He encouraged and often inspired them. For more than half a century Louis XIV inaugurated and directed a Reign of Beauty that has never been equalled.

Lastly came his supreme achievement in organizing the intellectual life of the nation. He arranged for scholars and scientists to be thrown together, that they might communicate their ideas and their discoveries to each other

and make common use of their individual experience. Above all, he encouraged all efforts to preserve in its purity the French language as a vehicle of French thought, and he stressed that urbanity of spirit without which even the best of ideas may become harmful.

Thus was France given an unexampled prestige. But this was not enough. The King wished to create an atmosphere that would arouse the sympathy and admiration of foreigners and attract them to her. The King wished to offer to visitors not merely the pleasures that France naturally afforded but also those peculiar to their own country. He had already conceived the idea of world expositions. At the bottom of his mind was a desire to have in France, and especially in Paris, everything that was to be found in the universe. In this regard, in Perrault's "Parallèle des anciens et des modernes," we are told of an interesting project of Colbert's, which was doubtless approved by the King, or at least was in complete accord with what he hoped to do. In the Louvre, which had finally been completed, he dreamed of laying out a Palace of the Nations; it would contain rooms built and decorated "in the fashion of every nation in the world—there would be rooms for Italy, Spain, Germany, Turkey, Persia, Mongolia, China. Not only would this building contain exact copies of the decorations used by these various nations in their palaces, but through careful research the furniture and conveniences peculiar to each country would be ascertained. The rooms would be so arranged that a foreigner entering them would have the pleasure of feeling that he was in his own country. *Thus all the splendor of the entire world would be enclosed within the walls of a single palace.*"

Not only were strangers attracted to France, but France followed them to their own countries, dazzling and charming them. French emissaries endeavored to influence public opinion in Europe and to make it favorable to France by flattering and, when necessary, subsidizing influential men. Artists, scholars, and men of letters were pensioned. Small debts were settled for embarrassed noblemen and statesmen. The King of France became the patron of all of these. Today we question the ethics of such methods, but then it was known as "experiencing the bounty of His Most Christian Majesty." The gesture was not without a certain magnificence.

Certain it is that the money expended in thus impressing foreigners was well spent. Even when Colbert had a mould made of the bas-reliefs in the Column of Trajan in Rome, it was not without an ulterior motive. "Do you think," asks Charles Perrault in this connection, "that in a square teeming with people from all over the world, the sight of an immense scaffolding rising tier upon tier around a column a hundred and twenty feet high, upon which swarms an army of workmen, and the knowledge that the Prince who is having this work done is at the head of a hundred thousand soldiers, forces each town that he attacks, or even threatens to attack, to adopt the laws of his country—do you think, I repeat, that such a sight, pleasant as it is, does not strike terror into the heart of foreigners who witness it, and does not leave them in an attitude a hundred times more flattering to France than the mere admission that the French have a taste for fine sculpture?"

Before the war of 1914, the Germans imitated in a heavy

and pitifully utilitarian manner the methods of this really regal advertiser. Louis XIV's advertising was not aggressive; it was designed to please, not to frighten. Perrault cites another example of it. During the campaign in Flanders the Spaniards stopped a French messenger, who had doubtless been instructed to permit himself to be arrested. He had on him several vouchers for the payment of money, one of which was made out to the company of Spanish comedians who were performing before the Queen at the French Court. One can imagine the amazement of the opposing general at this gallant gesture. "What, I ask," remarks Perrault, "were the general's reflections upon the lot of his own half-naked soldiers when he realized that the Prince against whom he was fighting was employing a company of Spanish comedians to entertain the Queen, and that he did this on condition that he should never be called upon to witness their performance?"

Thus, after all, it was in the service of France and to further national interests that Louis XIV expended such sums of money upon these magnificent displays. The personal prestige of the sovereign made it easier for his armies to triumph. The delightful life that he led impressed the world with his power. To achieve his dream he corrected and violated and re-made nature until it was forced to interpret his own conception and that of his artists. He made men also do his will; he knew how to get work out of them; he aroused their creative faculties until they assumed heroic proportions. He wanted to be surrounded by courage and beauty. When he strolled through the gardens at Versailles or Marly and saw about

him on those splendid lawns and terraces the throng of statues of mythological heroes he might well believe the assertion of his poets that he had actually brought Olympus down to the earth.

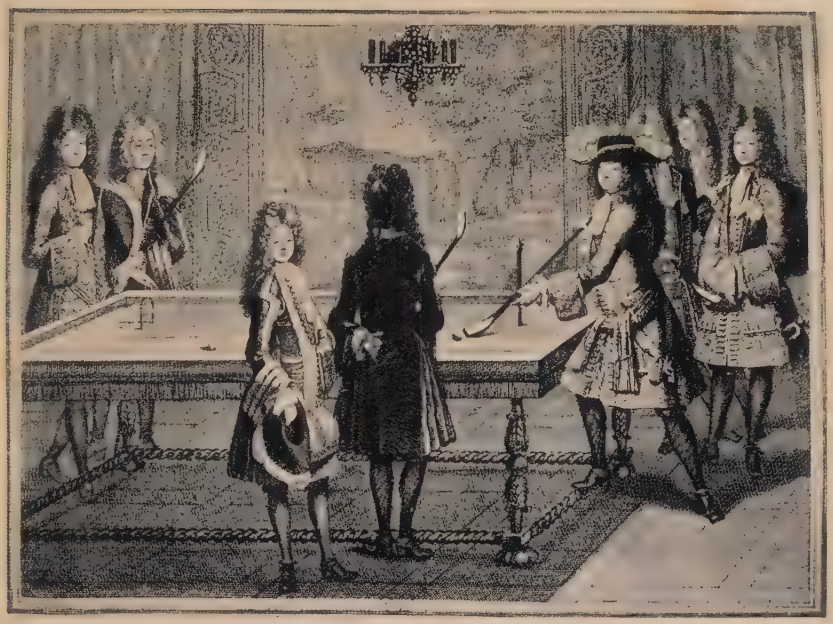
CHAPTER II

THE FLOWERING OF CHATEAU LIFE

THIS pleasure-loving man was essentially a hard worker. But for political reasons he disguised the fact, just as he disguised his preparations for war. He did not mind his courtiers knowing that he was at work while they were passing their time at cards or a comedy. But he did not want his seriousness to dampen the gaiety of the Court. At first no one believed that the young King, surrounded by a thousand provocative eyes, would really apply himself for long to the difficult task of personal government. Despite these unkind predictions, he held to his resolution. He forced himself to put in eight or nine hours' work a day; he read the reports of his ministers, making marginal notes in his own hand, he dictated numerous letters and occasionally wrote them himself. For a ruler, as for an ordinary individual, modern life requires a constantly increasing and ever more exhausting degree of concentration.

Louis XIV's natural vigor and "heroic good health," as Vallot, his physician, termed it, would not have been equal to the demands he put upon them had he not from the beginning established a perfect balance between mental and physical exertion. In order for his constitution to be

equal to the terrific strain placed upon it by his intellectual activity, he had to have periods of relaxation. Consequently he had a partiality for the country and for physical exercise. This "country gentleman," as he was ironically termed, was, in every sense of the word, an out-of-doors King. "The King loved to be out-of-doors," comments Saint Simon; and Dangeau writes, "The King was annoyed when a day passed without his going out, and the more preoccupied he was, the more he felt the necessity of doing so." He was so fond of fresh air that he would travel with the doors of his coach wide open, despite cold, rain, and dust. Madame de Maintenon, who was very frail, could never accustom herself to his habits and the couple usually travelled in separate conveyances. At Council meetings, in his office, or his apartments the air became overheated from the candles and torches and foul from the crowds of people who were constantly about. Consequently, when the King got away from them, he felt the need of clearing his head and his lungs and of stretching his muscles. He could never have too much air and space about him for this. He liked gardens with extensive lawns and terraces and great vistas where the air was clean and fresh; he liked large parks and forests where he could hunt and ride for days on end. Had as active a man as he, a man so fond of freedom and of constant movement, been shut up in the Louvre and in the unwholesome atmosphere of seventeenth century Paris, he would soon have become sickly and have fallen prey to all of the deadly fevers that were then so common. This is one reason—to my mind a most important reason—why he spent most of his life at Saint Germain, Versailles, and Marly. This was the beginning of chateau life in France,



THE KING AT PLAY

In the upper picture, from left to right, are: Monsieur (the King's brother), Duc de Vendôme, Comte le Thoulouze, M. de Chamillart, Louis XIV, M. de Armagnac, an unknown person, and Duc de Chartres

In the lower picture: Duchesse de Bourbon, Duc de Bourgogne, unknown, unknown, Monsieur, Princesse de Conti, Duc de Vendôme

and even today it remains almost as he left it. Louis XIV was responsible for the organization of life as we know it.

CHATEAU life in the seventeenth century opened up and gave life to the stale and somewhat suffocating atmosphere that had pervaded through the Middle Ages. First they felt the need for freedom, then for intimacy. They desired to enjoy that freedom in their own homes and to possess all possible comforts and conveniences—comforts and conveniences that had never or rarely been thought of before.

There are a thousand reasons why such a modern executive as Louis XIV should have been so eager to achieve a measure of personal freedom. He was overburdened with worries, with business, and with the purely ornamental duties of his office. He strove vigorously not to fall into a set routine. There is something heroic even in that. Modern historians do not seem to realize it. He is currently pictured as a great King reduced almost to the state of a royal mummy, enclosed within the gilded halls of Versailles as in a gorgeous mausoleum and shackled by an inflexible etiquette. What Saint Simon describes as "the mechanics" of the King's life has been taken literally and even exaggerated. Louis XIV did not invent this ritual. It existed in almost the same form at the time of the Valois. The King submitted to it, but he did his best to escape it and, as far as possible, to prevent his life from becoming purely mechanical. Often he did away with it entirely. Mass and the dinner hour were advanced or retarded according to the length of the council meeting, the beginning of a hunt, or trip to the country.

Toward two o'clock, immediately after lunch, the King, booted and spurred, would slip out through the marble courtyard and mount his horse, or, gun in hand, climb into his carriage. Twice a week he would hunt to the hounds, and practically every day when he did not go for a walk he would shoot in a nearby park. He was far above the average both as a horseman and as a shot. During his love affair with La Vallière, in a single day he made the round trip between Fontainebleau and Versailles by way of Vincennes and Saint Cloud—a distance of some ninety-five miles. Even when he was an old man his eye was so keen and his aim so steady that when he shot he is said never to have missed the mark. But at heart he was not passionately fond either of hunting or of riding. As a rule the Venetian ambassadors understood him remarkably well. One of them remarks: "The King exercises in the interest of his health. He hunts, but it is easy to see that he does so less because he likes it than to distract his mind and to counteract his tendency to take on weight." He found this a good way to be by himself, to get away from so many tiresome faces, or, perhaps, to think things out in quiet; it was especially welcome when, in the words of Dangeau, "some troublesome question annoyed him." It was only during these four or five hours twice a week that his time was really his own. Otherwise the only time he had really to himself was when he was in his canopied bed with the curtains pulled. It was there that he thought over important decisions and plotted out campaigns. During the War of the Spanish Succession he had frequent nightmares and would talk aloud during his sleep. Thus what Louis XIV wanted most in chateau life and in his

out-of-door exercise was bodily health and a chance to be alone.

Yet it is undeniable that he had a certain fondness for walking and hunting for themselves. Like all hunters, he engaged in the sport to use up energy, to show his skill, and for the pleasure he got from giving away his bag. The latter he distributed to the princesses and ladies of the Court, who would return to the chateau loaded down with partridges. He was also fond of making tours of inspection through his gardens and parks, stopping before new plantings or buildings in the process of erection, talking to architects, overseers, and gardeners. At such moments he was the simplest, most easy going and unpretentious of men. Once while they were talking together, he allowed Le Nôtre, carried away by a sudden burst of enthusiasm, to embrace him. It was well known that in Rome, Le Nôtre had thrown himself on the Pope's neck and kissed him too. When a courtier was telling about this event, describing it as incredible, the King interrupted with the remark: "Why not? Le Nôtre does it well."

But chateau life, as thus lived, implies an ability to get from place to place without difficulty. Life in the country is only pleasant when one can get about, make excursions, visit neighbors. For this, well stocked stables, excellent carriages, and good roads are necessary. Louis XIV was constantly on the move. One cannot stress too strongly the fact that this open-air monarch knew by heart almost every highway in his kingdom. Besides his prolonged trips, hardly a week passed when he did not go to Meudon, Saint Cloud, Marly, Rambouillet, or Saint

Germain. He travelled alone, on horseback or in an open carriage, partly for fear of indiscreet gossip with his courtiers, partly because of a desire for quiet thought.

It is for this reason that his great and his small stables became almost governmental departments. They were colossal, almost as impressive as the Palace itself. What was too good for the horses of the Sun King? Did they not also partake of their master's divinity? Besides these picked carriage and saddle horses, there were vehicles of all sorts, from the huge travelling coach which was almost a room on wheels, in which one could eat, play cards, and sleep, down to the chair on wheels in which the King was driven through the gardens when sick and decrepit. It might be said that the mere necessity of making frequent trips between Paris, Saint Germain, Versailles, and Fontainebleau created the French carriage-making industry. Until then the best carriages had always come from Italy and Spain. From the time of Louis XIV on, French carriages were more comfortable, more luxurious, faster, and had better springs than those of any other country. That would never have happened had it not been for him. He wanted France to lead in all fields. The increased use of carriages, not merely in Paris, but all through the country, was due to his example. La Bruyère, who often gave vent to pedantic outbursts, was scandalized by it. On the other hand Perrault, who was very moden in his outlook —even more modern than the King—delighted in these novelties. "Under Henri IV," he noted, "there were not more than a dozen carriages in all Paris. And what carriages they were! Now all the upper bourgeois have them." New roads were opened, old ones repaired for the use of these new conveyances. Everywhere traffic

increased. Under the impetus supplied by Colbert and the King the most backward provinces began to bestir themselves.

No doubt all too frequently wars hindered the carrying out of these fine projects. Actually the roads were often vile, the carriages, and especially the coaches, wretchedly primitive. It is not difficult to draw a graphic picture of ancient France with carriages overturned or stuck in the mud, roads impassable, and taverns filthy and vermin-ridden, with six people sleeping in the same room and sometimes in the same bed. But we may be sure that posterity will be just as sarcastic about the wrecking of our trains and the injury of passengers, about our dirty, poorly heated, badly lighted railway carriages, our pasteboard palaces, the chaotic confusion in our streets and the stifling dust on our country roads.

But even more it was in the arrangement and furnishing of the house itself that this very modern and pleasure-loving Louis XIV introduced the greatest innovations. Having decided upon the country, he wanted to live where the air was good, where there was water and a fine view. It was to obtain these three things that he chose Marly and thus precipitated an æsthetic revolution and the resuscitation of French architecture.

His sterner critics have reproached him for abandoning the Louvre for Saint Germain and Versailles; it is a very ill considered rebuke. For one thing, the Louvre had long been uninhabited before the King and Anne of Austria took up their residence there. Louis knew, moreover, that he could not keep too far away from the capital if he wished to escape being at the mercy of factions and

being made prisoner by a mob. Renan, in considering nineteenth century governments, was struck by the disadvantages under which those in power labored at being so completely at the mercy of popular factions in Paris. He thought that the capital, or at least the seat of the government, should be in some town or small city in the central part of the country—some town like Bourges or Poitiers, equally protected from foreign invasions and from the revolutionary movements in the large cities. Louis XIV had certainly taken these disadvantages into consideration. Above all he recalled the Fronde; he never forgave the Parlement and the people of Paris for having forced him to flee accompanied by his mother and the Prime Minister. That, certainly, was the most important reason for his decision to spend as little time as possible in his capital.

We must also remember that not only was the Louvre uninhabited, but it was almost uninhabitable. It was a Louvre reduced to the central wing to the west and little more than the gallery of Apollo toward the river. The present courtyard did not exist; where it now stands there were then a number of ruins and one of the remaining towers of the mediæval Louvre. The Palace was hemmed in by buildings on all sides except towards the river and cut off from the Tuileries by various constructions. Where the Colonnade now stands, there was a foul, ill-famed street running down to the Seine. The King's own bedroom was dark. He must have felt extremely crowded in that half-finished palace where he, his wife, his mother, his brother, the Cardinal and the latter's sister and nieces—all of them with more or less extensive retinues—had to live together. Moreover, in those days the

Louvre was surrounded by moats of stagnant water which gave off the most nauseating stench as soon at it grew warm. It should not be forgotten that we today can have no conception of the frightful odors of Paris—of that overcrowded, filthy quarter of Paris around the markets. Such reasons—not to mention others of a more personal nature—were quite sufficient to justify him in abandoning this uncouth residence. When it came to a choice between the garden of the Louvre, surrounded by high walls, and reeking with the vile fumes from the surrounding filth and sewage—between this gloomy shut-in palace and the light and airy lawns of Saint Germain—there could not have been a moment's hesitation.

Saint Germain offered few advantages beside its fine site, its wholesome atmosphere, and, for one interested in hunting and love-making, the fact that it was so near the forest. The new chateau (which no longer exists) was already in ruins. Moreover, except for the lawns and gardens facing the Seine, it had never been very imposing. The archaic and badly preserved old chateau was scarcely more comfortable than the Louvre. Louis XIV resolved to rebuild it to his own liking and make it over into a very modern and luxurious residence.

The present building is only vaguely reminiscent of Louis XIV's chateau. It now has the forbidding atmosphere common to most school buildings. It is but a clumsy imitation of what it was, a restoration in the manner of the French Renaissance. Face to face with its gloomy bulk, one longs for the changes and embellishments wrought in the seventeenth century.

A few years after he moved to Saint Germain the King had completed the rebuilding and modernization of the

old chateau first constructed by Francis I. His contemporaries were astonished at the result. What excited their admiration even more were the balconies which had been constructed on the principal sides of the building—one facing the forest and the other the valley of the Seine and Paris. And then there was what was called "the new terrace." An official visitor, in a letter to Mademoiselle de Scudéry, expresses his enthusiasm in the following terms: "Monsieur Lebrun took us over the terrace. . . . Everyone was surprised and charmed at its flawless perfection. It seemed as if we had been transferred to ancient Assyria or Egypt—and that these were the hanging gardens we had heard so much about. . . . It is possible to go directly from this terrace into the King's room, but at the moment he was dressing.

And yet there were few guards about.
There was the same liberty as elsewhere
In place of frequent halberdiers
Were many rows of flowers.

We walked between rows of cherry-laurel, jasmin, and tuberose."

This visitor, doubtless prompted by Monsieur Lebrun, has expressed quite clearly what above all else the King wanted at Saint Germain—liberty, a chance for intimacy, a place where he could live as he pleased without guards and a mob of courtiers. And then there was the view, that unbroken vista of forests, green meadows, and gently sloping hills, not yet spoiled, as today, by unsightly factory buildings. Louis XIV, a man of dominating personality, liked an unobstructed view of the surrounding country—it helped him to think clearly and satisfied his instinctive

feeling for grandeur. And how much greater perspective at Versailles or at Saint Germain than at the Louvre!

The King was much taken with the beauty of this spot, as is witnessed by the fact that he had a little apartment along the more picturesque side of the terrace, the one facing the new chateau, from the windows of which he could see the towers of Saint Denis. From his private rooms, he could look out across the lawns at fountains, "embroidered flower beds" and the vast, billowing expanse of the forest.

He loved flowers and had them constantly about him. He liked the heavily perfumed, voluptuous blossoms of the jasmin and tuberose. He had them put in the rooms of his mistresses and banked outside their doors and windows. The balconies at Saint Germain were an unbroken hanging garden. He liked exotic shrubs, such as rose-laurels, lemon and orange trees. Orange trees especially were a great luxury in those days, and both Saint Germain and Versailles were filled with them. They were a passion with the King; in the midst of a campaign in Franche-Comté, we find him worried about the effect produced by the new trees. He liked birds as well as flowers, and had aviaries everywhere. There was even one in the Marble Court, at Versailles. "Everywhere were rare birds from far-off lands," we are told by the good hearted La Fontaine, who, along with his friends Boileau, Racine, and Molière, was transported with delight at the sight of the royal menagerie. "What pleased them most were the *Demoiselles de Numidie* and certain cormorants with extremely long beaks. . . . Nothing could have been more beautiful." In both flowers and birds, the King liked brilliant colors and striking effects. All his life he wanted to be

surrounded by pretty animals, by youth, life, and happiness.

This country gentleman intended to have his chateau equipped with all possible conveniences and luxuries. He was highly exacting in his demands upon architects, decorators, and workmen. First, he must have light and airy apartments with high ceilings and large, unshaded bay windows. Louis XIV, the Sun God, needed both light and fresh air. It might be said that wherever he went he brought light with him.

This is strikingly demonstrated by a comparison of the chateaux he built with those of the Renaissance—Versailles with the gloomy chateau at Blois. The latter seems to be on a niggardly scale; the windows are narrow, the doorways low, the halls dark and winding. In those days a Prince was in constant fear of being attacked by assassins or murderers; the tiny doors and tortuous halls would hinder, or perhaps stop their rush. But Louis XIV no longer suffered such fears. In his residence everything was opened up. High windows supplied abundant light to gaily decorated salons.

This new style of architecture required new furnishings, and the King proved himself quite as skilful in arranging furniture and tapestries as in building and decorating. When he moved to Saint Germain he completely changed all the interior decorations. "Walls and ceilings," we are told in the "Letter to Mademoiselle de Scudéry," "are covered with elaborately framed mirrors; gold is the least of the decorations employed. The floors would be the glory of any building. They are of multicolored marble arranged in mosaics of various patterns. In each corner and lining the walls of the rooms are large

silver vases filled with flowers, and silver urns and pedestals inlaid with gold." Silver was used in the greatest profusion. They were attempting to outdo Spain. But since Spain had more gold than any other country, they were forced to fall back on silver. The pots for the orange trees, the sideboards, and all the dishes were of massive silver. This rather crude display of wealth savored of the parvenu and the Spaniards were not slow to make fun of it. It must be admitted that the young Louis XIV did not always avoid the ridiculous.

He liked comfort quite as much as rich display. His summer residence at Saint Germain was to be cool and pleasant. Consequently many of the rooms were equipped with fountains. In the rotunda in the "petit apartment," "there was a large silver vessel in the chimney from which spout a hundred jets of water. This cools the room in summer." In the centre of the chateau was a realistically decorated room called "the grotto" with a fountain which was reflected in mirrors on both the walls and ceiling. It used to be said of the little cupid painted on the ceiling that he was "caught between the jets of water."

The King showed a taste for luxury and novelty in his food similar to that displayed in the construction and furnishing of his chateau. But in this he did not go to excess; some of his dishes would seem to us rather coarse, and the food at Court was more plentiful than dainty. However their culinary efforts far surpassed those of their predecessors. Louis XIV's partiality to the unusual applied also to fruits. He was eager for the first peas of the season, the first melons, fresh figs, pomegranates, and oranges. Under the general supervision of his chief stew-

ard, La Quintinie, he had a kitchen garden which was a model for the whole nation and he had makers of lemonade and chocolate and especially of sherbets who rivalled the best in Spain and Italy. His table services were of the most gorgeous.

He introduced a number of other innovations, principal among which was the wax candle, which was used in a variety of ways—in cressets, in crystal chandeliers, in branched candlesticks, in candelabra. He caused a revolution in lighting, and, as we are too prone to forget, quite changed and broadened modern life. The use of wax candles made it possible for receptions and fêtes to be more brilliant, more frequent and less expensive. Soon even in out-of-the-way country seats, men and women no longer went to bed promptly at sun-down. Instead of the former smoky evil-smelling oil lamps or tallow candles, they had wax candles. Card tables, ball rooms, and drawing rooms were properly illumined. This progress in lighting caused a profound change in manners and customs.

The palace of the Sun King was equipped with the very latest comforts and conveniences. The chair (the reader will guess which one is referred to) was not only a great improvement upon those that had preceded it, but was elegantly appointed. He would grant audiences while seated there, just as he would take clysters in public. If one refers to the Royal Inventory of Furniture for this period, he will discover that at Versailles there was a veritable army of chairs and various other utensils that were then very uncommon in France. There were bathtubs, all kinds of silver basins and ewers, candle-snuffers, warm-

ing pans, sponge boxes, spittoons—"A silver gilt spittoon for the King, at Marly," and finally, "little perfume sprays with ebony handles inlaid in silver."

So much for convenience. For pleasure and amusement there were various open air entertainments—elaborate picnics, music on the water, gondola rides—balls, plays and the opera; games in the gardens—bagatelle, "London Bridge," "Drop the handkerchief," "Who's got the thimble," see-saw, swinging and many more! When it was cold or rainy, they amused themselves with cards, lotteries, and chamber music.

The King was directly responsible for the organization of this pleasant life. His contemporaries all agree upon that, either to praise or to blame him for it. In his "Examen de conscience sur les devoirs de la royauté," which is merely a long indictment of Louis XIV, Fénélon accuses him specifically of being responsible for the growing corruption of manners: "Today," he writes, "there are more six-horse carriages in Paris than there were mules a hundred years ago. In those days people did not need rooms to themselves; a room with several beds in it was good enough for a number of persons. Now people require large apartments and suites of rooms. Everyone wants a private garden where he may dig up the ground, build fountains, and erect statues; parks and houses are demanded whose upkeep is greater than the revenue from the grounds around them. And why has all this happened? Because of the bad example of one man!" It is, of course, the King to whom he refers.

We should note in passing that this virtuous critic, the Archbishop of Cambrai, kept open house himself and lived

luxuriously. The frugality he recommends, one takes it, should be practised only at Versailles. But, as Voltaire remarks, the denunciation of luxury is one of the stock-in-trade accusations of ecclesiastical orators.

The King looked upon these new comforts and conveniences as a means of stimulating national commerce and industry. Moreover he felt entitled to some comfort and relaxation after the worry and turmoil of business. Lastly, he was as fond of physical comfort as he was of making love. If to these reasons was added a love of glory, how can one find the courage to blame this young man who shirked none of his regal duties? His diversions were only necessary breathing spells in his accomplishment of great projects.

As he conceived and arranged it, chateau life was a steady succession of entertainments, from early morning until one got one's candle and went to bed; but in his own case it was broken by daily work. In the morning at the appointed time a valet would come into the royal apartment, and softly open the shutters. The King's nurse would then enter *and kiss him* to awaken him. What a charming rite! What a good omen to begin the day with a kiss—even though with a somewhat maternal one! Then came mass to the accompaniment of music. (A motet was always chanted, according to Saint Simon.) After that, dinner to the music of violins, then a walk or hunting, light refreshments on the lawn or in the gallery with the ladies daintily dressed, a play, supper at ten o'clock, again to the accompaniment of violins, with a large number of courses served in gorgeous dishes in a setting of unequalled brilliance. Even the informal suppers

and concerts were enchanting. Madame de Sévigné, who was invited to the small apartment of the ladies-in-waiting at Saint Germain, assures us that they played "the most divine music."

CHAPTER III

VERSAILLES AND MARLY

IN THE midst of the War of the Spanish Succession, at the saddest, the most distressing moment of Louis XIV's reign, Madame de Maintenon wrote to the Princesse des Ursins: "We are now at the most delightful spot. I do not know, Madame, whether you have ever seen Trianon at this time of year. . . ." It was June, the gorgeous season at Versailles. This beautiful spot must indeed have been enchanting for that dull, withered woman to notice it, especially at such a moment. Despite the King's old age, the defeat of his armies, and his increasing devoutness, the delightful life at Court continued unaltered.

Louis XIV realized early in his reign that the architectural setting bequeathed him by his predecessors was not adapted to the pomp and the pleasure of the new life he had devised. These old palaces no longer reflected the majesty of France or the grandeur of his own projects. A new setting was sorely needed. But the King's architectural programme was based not merely upon the need for new buildings to fit in with his other plans. He loved the buildings for themselves and for the pleasure their con-

struction gave him; he loved them after the manner of a great Italian nobleman, a Pope, or a Roman Prince. One might say that they were the great passion of his life, that they outweighed and eventually superseded his fondness for gallantry and love-making. During this same war, Madame de Maintenon, in another letter, remarks that buildings remain "his only pleasure." They were his one consolation. Bussy goes so far as to say: "The King would have sacrificed all of his women for Versailles!"

But in this, as in all else, the King maintained a certain moderation. He is undoubtedly the most extraordinary example of the "classic man" ever known. His taste for pomp and display was counter-balanced by his strict economy. He might even be accused of avarice. The Venetians, and Italians like Primi Visconti, did not hesitate to call him a miser. But this was merely his method of maintaining a perfect equilibrium, and of checking those extravagant inclinations of his which might have brought him to ruin. It is certain that he endeavored to be economical, that as far as possible he made use of the materials left him by his predecessors. At Versailles, for instance, he retained his father's shabby old chateau and tried to rebuild it so that it would be in keeping with the splendor of the newly constructed buildings. He always sought to produce the greatest effect with the least effort —which is one of the most characteristic qualities in the classical method.

Various other contradictory qualities in him counter-balanced each other. He wanted things to be sumptuous and beautiful and done on a large scale. In the words of Colbert, he wanted to leave lasting monuments that would recall "the great work of the Romans." Yet he delighted

in gratifying passing whims, in sponsoring ephemeral masterpieces destined to contribute solely to the enjoyment of the moment, and in no way to attract the admiration of posterity. Thus he counteracted the rather solemn and studied effect of his massive buildings by his love for things that were delicate, pleasant, and even a trifle frivolous.

Thus there were two distinctly different backgrounds for this stately and delightfully pleasant Court life. The one, magnificent and lasting, resulted in the great monuments that we all know; the other, delicate and perishable, lasted but for a single day or night. These festivals and entertainments were conjured up with lightning speed. Their effect was like that produced by the royal gardeners, who could alter the whole appearance of the landscape by merely changing the flower pots.

According to the Venetian Ambassador, the King himself admitted that he built "Versailles for the Court, Marly for his friends and Trianon for himself." He sponsored two distinctly different types of buildings; the one personal and private; the other public and, one might say, universal.

BOTH types *were created by the King himself*. It is curious, almost unbelievable, that today one should be forced to insist so strongly upon this fact. But ever since the romantic epoch it has been implicitly believed that great works of art and great literature are the natural and spontaneous expression of the inherent genius of a nation. It is assumed that Cathedrals and epic poems have sprung into being of their own accord. The age of Louis XIV is merely the chance appearance of a number of great artists,

scholars, administrators, and warriors. It is only by convention that the name of the King is connected with their achievements; in this he is attempting to usurp their rightful glory. At Versailles one speaks only of Mansart, Le Nôtre, Lebrun, Coysevox and the like. It is none the less difficult not to see that the personality of the King is everywhere apparent. Therefore, although his influence upon and collaboration in all these marvels must be admitted, it is qualified and disparaged as far as possible. The King had no taste in art. What defects there are in these masterpieces are due to his interference; their greatness and beauty is due solely to the genius of the artists and architects.

On the other hand, there are those who consider him to have been a veritable "æsthete." No title could befit him less. A King has no right to be an æsthete. Louis XIV took public opinion too much into consideration to be willing thus to expose his dignity to ridicule. But there can be no doubt that he did stimulate and inspire the artists of his day as no one else has ever done.

In the first place he gave commissions and paid well to have them executed. As a builder, he saw things on a large scale and knew what he wanted. Artists and craftsmen who worked for him knew not only that they would be generously rewarded, but that their efforts would be appreciated by a man who understood them, by a man who loved their art, a man upon whose friendship and affection they could rely. What is rarer than the unwavering and sympathetic encouragement of him for whom one is working?

Each age has the art it deserves. When those in power are indifferent to beauty, art either becomes standardized

and mechanical, or else paradoxical, fantastically individual, and bereft of all relation to the nation that inspires it. Because of his love for art and artists Louis XIV deserved all the beautiful things that were created during his reign. It was only proper that he should have been the first to enjoy them. La Fontaine must have had him in mind when he wrote that exquisite passage in "Psyche": "He was extremely fond of gardens, flowers, and shaded places. Polyphile was like him in this but it might be said that *he loved everything*. The breadth of his appreciation made him tender-hearted and sympathetic." Louis XIV likewise loved everything, and was likewise "tender-hearted and sympathetic." We have already noted how he allowed Le Nôtre to kiss him. He writes as follows to one of his agents who was collecting rare objects for him in Spain and Italy: "Monsieur l'Abbé Elpidio Benedetti: I have directed Count de Brienne to write you in detail about the antique medals and rings that you sent on by Héron. As for the painted silk bedspread forwarded by the same messenger, I am very pleased with it, and still more so with the affection that prompted you to send it. As it merits a better answer than the mere expression of my thanks, I shall not attempt to do so here and shall leave the matter to Monsieur Colbert, whom I have directed to attend to it." It was not enough that people should merely fulfill their allotted tasks; he wished them to put personal feeling into what they did. He had somewhat the same enthusiasm for those who created beautiful objects as for the objects themselves.

He was interested not merely in collecting antiques, paintings, statues, or tapestries, but in all that was un-

usual. He liked the pretty, the amusing, or even the frivolous, as well as the beautiful and the impressive. When his cousin, the Duke de Beaufort, was setting out on a trip to the Barbary Coast, he requested him not to forget the royal menageries and aviaries. "I shall see that you are provided with funds for the purchase of rare animals in the countries you visit. As for birds, I shall be happy to have as many of them as you can bring back. I shall also expect you to send me some orange trees by whatever means seems most convenient."

He directed Colbert, who was organizing a lottery, to "try as soon as possible to find the prettiest and most acceptable gifts in Paris. . . . The main prize should be worth about five hundred pistoles (five thousand francs). I will not set any fixed price for the others; I will be satisfied with the prettiest things you can find at a moderate price. You might get rings, bracelets, watches, brooches, jewel boxes, etc. . . . There must be an elaborate casket to put them in." We should note in passing his instinct for economy, as witnessed by the phrase "at a moderate price." He wanted the best at the lowest possible price.

There was good precedent for Louis XIV's interest in art and in collecting rare and amusing articles. In this he could pattern himself upon his munificent ancestors, the Valois, who were patrons of art and were very fond of it, and upon his grandfather, Henri IV, who was a great builder. He was also quite definitely influenced by Mazarin's passion for collecting. And it was not for nothing that he had been born and brought up in palaces that were museums in themselves. From childhood he had lived among works of art. Later he was in constant contact with artists of all sorts and loved to make himself familiar

with the details of their various crafts. What devotee of the arts could have better training? The foremost artists of his age were his instructors. But he himself had innate good taste and judgment. He could distinguish between the truly great and the second rate. He showed real discernment in his choice of works of art. Saint Simon claims he was cleverly inveigled into making the decisions he did by such men as Le Nôtre and Mansart. It is said that the latter once submitted a faulty plan to him merely to give him the pleasure of pointing out the crude and obvious mistakes in it. He pretended to correct it along the lines indicated by His Majesty and had the malicious satisfaction of having the plans he had originally decided upon approved after feigned opposition on his part.

This anecdote may have a foundation in fact, but one cannot put implicit faith in it. Louis XIV was too sly a hand at the game, too constantly on his guard, to be taken in by such a trick. If in the end he approved the architect's own plan, it was because it was the best. Moreover, he did not place blind confidence in his own judgment. Far from thinking himself infallible, he was quite capable of admitting his mistakes. The way in which Versailles was constantly retouched is a good example of this. If the last vestiges of the poor Italian taste disappeared, if the grotto and the painted lead statues representing figures from Æsop's fables were removed, if the net-work of canals on the main terrace in front of the Palace was simplified—it is probable that these things were done upon the advice of his gardeners and architects. It is greatly to the King's credit that he had the good sense to realize the validity of their objections, and that he backed them up with his full authority.

His artistic experience was of quite a different sort from that of a pupil in the Beaux Arts today, or of one who attends current lectures upon æsthetics and the history of art. His knowledge was much more definite, more practical. Occasionally he took great pride in personally drawing up the plans for his workmen. Soon after the arrival of his grandson, Philip V, in Spain, he suggested to him that he plant a French garden in the Retiro. "*He is going to sketch out a plan for you,*" writes Madame de Maintenon, "and find you a gardener. He is also going to ask Marshal d'Harcourt what plants are suitable for the soil there."

It was only because the King gave Versailles his personal attention, and was not content merely to watch it spring up of its own accord, that it became the glorious place it was in the period of its splendor.

I REPEAT, Versailles was a personal achievement of the King. It is positively amazing that in this palace which was his masterpiece, one never sees his name, even upon his own statue; that in this national sanctuary dedicated to "all the glories of France," his alone should be forgotten.

Blinded by its romantic prejudices, the nineteenth century was most unfair to Versailles. It seems as though it had been bent upon outstripping even Saint Simon in its absurd disparagement. The latter, with his usual malice, decries even the landscape at Versailles and Marly. The one he terms an arid, sandy desert, the other a dismal marsh without vista. As between the man who chose these sites and the man who criticised them, one does not question for a moment that it was Saint Simon who was the philistine.

The mere fact that Louis XIV selected these two places marks him as an artist. One might define an architectural masterpiece as the combination of a beautiful building and a beautiful setting. The Parthenon gains much of its striking beauty from the magnificent pedestal upon which it rests. Likewise the greatest charm of the austere and imposing Escorial is its setting. That palace, silhouetted against the barren desolation of the Castilian landscape, set so firmly upon those huge rocks, gives an effect of overpowering magnificence and yet of restraint. It was a stroke of genius on Philip II's part to have built it there. Louis XIV was no less inspired when he picked out Versailles and Marly. In all the *Ile de France,* except for Saint Germain, it would have been impossible to find two more perfect sites. In both places the combination of forests, hills, and vast, untrammelled vistas was unsurpassed.

The first thing, therefore, to note about Versailles, is its magnificent landscape. It was an extraordinary innovation in those days to combine nature with architecture, to enlist the collaboration of all the elements—water, fire, air, and the earth. Ordinarily at Versailles one notes only the smooth terraces, the hedges of hornbeam, the "tiny yew trees set out in rows like onions," the geometrical patterns of the flower-beds—in short, one notes only the way in which nature is clipped, corrected, and tamed. But one fails to observe that this subjugation of nature to the artist's conception is done with the express purpose of carrying the eye by almost imperceptible stages from the architectural bulk of the buildings to the large, shapeless green masses of trees and meadows on the horizon, to lead the eye gently from the artificial to the natural. First

come the stone and marble buildings, next the symmetrically arranged shrubs and flowers, then the nobly coördinated mass of the large trees in the parks, and finally the surging, disordered sea of tree tops and the limitless sky. At Versailles one is in a drawing room filled with the most delicate works of art—and yet one is in the midst of the woods. A hunter standing between the recumbent statues of the Rivers and the beautiful bronze and alabaster vases on the main terrace in front of the chateau, is ever conscious of the fact that but a gun-shot below partridges and rabbits are awaiting him in the thickets and on the meadows.

Thus in the end nature is not really deformed or enslaved; she remains in essence untouched. She is but made to submit to a certain discipline, to enter, as it were, into the ordered scheme of things as conceived by the artist. This is the classic conception in all its breadth and beauty.

French gardeners in those days realized that the possibilities of their native landscape had never been exploited; that it offered advantages unequalled in either Spain or Italy. Foremost among these advantages was the abundance of water and trees. Anyone who has been for some time in the countries of southern Europe will be struck by the opulence of the French landscape. The Italian country place seems dry and barren compared with our chateaux. A traveller unaccustomed to the luxuriance of the vegetation in northern countries is amazed by the sound of wind whispering through the leaves of vast, thick-grown forests and by the sight of countless gleaming streams. Not without real significance is the symbolic representation of our rivers and streams as pouring through an urn held by a sculptured figure. It took a

man of the genius of Le Nôtre to merge buildings, rivers, and woods into a harmonious unit. He surrounded the masonry of the palaces with colonnades and amphitheatres of verdure and brought order to the sprouting twigs and myriad leaves of the trees; and, as a final stroke, he added the mystic touch of water—of bubbling, shimmering, gurgling streams and smooth unruffled pools that gathered up and reflected the glories of the heavens. And then when daylight had vanished, he outlined the buildings in points of fire; with his fireworks and illuminations he linked flame and water in close embrace.

Charles Perrault wrote in praise of the beauty of Versailles: "If it is true that water is the soul of a garden, what gardens would not seem sickly or dead compared with these?" That is true today even though the sound of water rushing down over the terraces and flowing smoothly beneath the rows of trees is heard no more.

Louis XIV deserves credit for having perceived the originality of this plan. He provided the funds and did all that was possible for the furtherance of this great decorative scheme. Had it not been for him, had there not been some intelligent spectator, someone passionately interested in what was happening, to inspire the work; and had he not had such a lofty conception of his position, had he not thought to sum up the glories of the nation in his own person, had he not, in short, been a King for whom nothing could be too glorious or too beautiful, none of these marvels would have come to pass.

But it was at Marly even more than at Versailles that Louis XIV demonstrated the full measure of his genius as architect, interior decorator, and gardener. Marly was

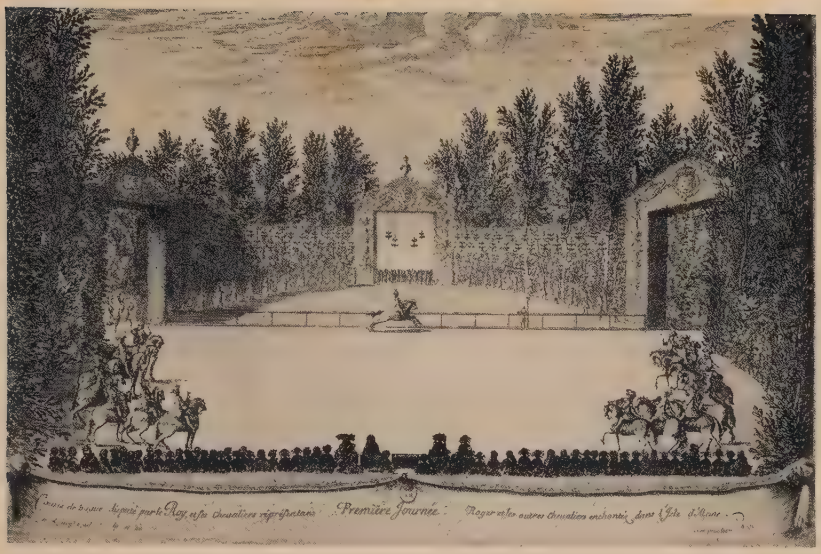
built for the King and his personal friends. Coming after the early tentative groping at Saint Germain, and the experiments and triumphal achievements at Versailles, Marly was the complete and perfect expression of Louis XIV's great conception; it was undoubtedly his masterpiece. One can never cease to lament the savage destruction of this exquisite work of art during the revolution. The chief masterpiece of that great century has been lost to us.

As far as one can tell from contemporary engravings, Marly seems to have been even more successful than Versailles. The setting for the main building is perfect in unity and proportion, whereas the principal façade of the chateau at Versailles is somewhat eclipsed by the excessive grandeur of the terraces. The perspective is more extensive; the grouping of the buildings more harmonious; there are no old buildings to spoil the effect; and, finally, the view is better. In his "Mémoires," the Duke de Luynes writes: "The King instructed Mansart to find a site near Versailles where there were woods, water, and a fine view." Never were instructions better obeyed. The view at Marly is perhaps the most beautiful thing about the place. The giant trees in the distance slip aside like a rising curtain upon the stage, and one gets a sudden view of the winding Seine, and beyond it the hills near Saint Germain. With this setting and the abundance of water and forest to be found there, the King's gardeners had an opportunity never equalled to practise their craft; they made full use of it.

Louis XIV was especially anxious that this most comfortable and pleasant of residences should be cool in the summer. It was to be the Fountain Palace. The cour-

tiers thought of it as an enchanted spot. One begged the favor of going there as he asked for Heaven in his prayers: "Sire, Marly!" This Fountain Palace was in essence a huge, open-air room in which the decorators had used water, trees, shrubs, and lawn to achieve the most ingenious and unexpected effects. From the thick masses of the trees they cut out niches for statues, and little glades set off with stone columns topped by carved capitals, vases, or cressets. The arched branches of the trees formed domes and cupolas. The close-cropped hedges and shrubs made solid walls and colonnades along the walks. There was a *Salon du Nord,* a *Salon du Levant,* a *Haut Dais de Bacchus, a Cabinet de l'Ombre,* the latter equipped with rustic tables and benches, and boxwood hedges clipped in the shape of folding screens and panelled walls; there was a *Cabinet des Dames,* a *Cabinet du Prince,* a *Salle Verte,* a *Cabinet de Cérès, a Cabinet d'Amphitrite,* and many more!

But nothing could compare with the maze of ponds, fountains, and cascades at Marly. It was the triumph of Neptune with his many shells, his tridents, his sea chariots, his scaly monsters, his retinue of Nereids and slimy gods of the sea. In the midst of all these marvels the great cascade of the Tapis-Vert lifted its column of crystal against the lofty background of forest. This restless, sparkling column shot up from a basin balanced on the backs of gilded Tritons, discharged into a lower pool, and splashed down marble steps. The frothy white of the water was in strange contrast to the quiet, opaque darkness of the towering trees in the background. The thundering, glistening water with its spray falling all about in tiny rainbows, seemed to flow out across the gardens as if from a



OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT AT MARLY

Engravings by Israel Silvestre

spring and vanished in a thousand magnificent flowers—it wound about taking on the form of pointed stems, aigrettes, bouquets, mushrooms, beehives and arborescent sheaves; it ran through long arched aqueducts beneath which one might find cool shelter from the heat. There were theatres of water, with torches and chandeliers replaced by flashing jets of water and the shining domes of fountains; instead of footlights, the brilliant, shimmering edge of the water as it poured over the brink of a falls. It is hard to picture the dazzling brilliance of this scene when it was illuminated at night—an enchanted fairyland of quivering reflections. Louis XIV, Sun God and King of Fountains, actually achieved the marriage of fire with water. Never has water lent itself so to enchantment. But this fairy land fled with the doom of the monarchy and our eyes will never behold its splendor.

Yet somehow the whole place remained simple and unpretentious. The Tapis-Vert with its marble basins, its Tritons, and its gilded vases was called "The Rustic Cascade." The King regarded it as a trifling ornament that might be displaced on the morrow if caprice so ordered. It was not intended to outlast him; it was merely part of the background for the entertainment of a day. The large central pavilion at Marly and the twelve smaller ones that surrounded it were frescoed like the wings of a theatre. Although these hastily improvised structures did not last a hundred years, contemporary engravings give us a fairly accurate idea of how they looked. But where can we find again those delicate masterpieces of the cabinet maker's, the goldsmith's, the locksmith's art that disappeared with the destruction of the chateau? Where are the open air theatres, ball rooms and banqueting halls

conjured up out of a bit of cloth, a few trees and a lawn for the enchantment of an evening as if by the wave of a magic wand? Our modern decorators seem to have lost the secret. But yet, as at Versailles, those light and airy edifices rested on huge, solid foundations. The fragments of the walls that supported them allow us to estimate what enormous preparation these entertainments entailed. They resemble Roman ruins.

Thus although Marly was a simple country house where the King went for relaxation, it had the same majestic air as Versailles. Louis XIV delighted in such spectacles of art and industry. Wherever he went he brought beauty and splendor with him; no place remained the same after he had been there. He not only created order and beauty, but he added brilliant color in such a manner as to delight the eye of an artist. He had an extraordinary feeling for color. At Marly everything was colorful from the gondolas slipping quietly through the canals, to the sails and awnings on the boats and the carp swimming in the fountains. The gondolas were red, green, white, yellow, blue, orange, and were upholstered in the most colorful brocades and brocatelles, satins from Bruges, velvets from Genoa, Florence and Milan, crimson taffetas embroidered and fringed with gold. The Princess Palatine was enraptured by the carp at Marly "spotted with red, yellow, gold, blue, and black," that looked like living particles of enamel swimming about in the transparent water.

These royal residences have now lost their lustre. To picture Versailles as it looked at the time of the Sun King one must imagine it with roofs and gutters, statues, water pipes and fountains, carriages and chairs, all brightly gilded; one must imagine multi-colored costumes and pic-

ture the effect of coats and skirts elaborately decorated, of hats trimmed with flame-colored or crimson plumes. Even such a middle-class woman as Madame de Maintenon, doubtless coached by the King, came to feel the gorgeousness of the effect of brilliantly colored clothes set off against the green of garden or park. She writes the Princess des Ursins: "All of our cardinals are coming to Fontainebleau. It would be a great shame if they did not come, for they are a great ornament to the Court and their brilliant red costumes go perfectly with the green at Marly."

The King's taste for art and his love for all that was beautiful combined marvellously with the duties of his profession. Amid the bewitching pleasures of Marly he never forgot that he was King of France. "On the morning of August 4, 1693," says de Sourches in his "Mémoires," "as he was on his way to mass, the King caught sight of Albergotti, an infantry sergeant who had brought the report of Marshal de Luxembourg after the battle of Nerwinde. He paused to ask him whether he had brought with him the regimental colors and flags that had been captured. Albergotti replied that he had fifty-five regimental colors and two flags, whereupon the King ordered that they be spread upon the floor in the salon at Marly. It pleased him that the foreign ministers and princes who happened to be there should see them." Thus on that August morning at Marly the foreign ambassadors walked upon flags captured from the enemies of France.

THERE are certain melancholy souls who would rather think of the cost of this monumental masterpiece of Louis

XIV than admire its beauty. Whatever may be said about it, it would seem that these marvellous palaces were built at a very moderate cost. Show me the modern government that can carry on a war for forty years, as Louis XIV did, and still have the energy and resources to put through a building programme that will change the appearance of an entire nation. Had his buildings cost much more than they did, Louis XIV would still deserve great thanks for having beautified France. For years past and for years to come Versailles will continue to contribute more to the happiness of millions of people than all the works of practical utility so soon to be outdated would have given to the two or three generations of French people who could have enjoyed them. And one should not forget that one must know how to suffer in order to merit beauty. In this the King was the first to point the way.

Nothing could be more vulgar than to begrudge Louis XIV the money he spent on Versailles. Diderot, for instance, finds it possible to praise Marly while disparaging the man who built it. "What a sublime place! What a mind it took to plan these gardens! . . . I conjure up the ghosts of Henri IV and Louis XIV. The latter points out this superb edifice to his grandfather:

" 'You are right, my son. It is beautiful! But I should like to look at the houses of the peasants of Gonesse!'

"What would he have thought had he known that in the country around these imposing palaces the peasants slept on straw and hadn't even a roof over their heads or bread in their mouths?" What gratitude for beauty! There will always be peasants who, through their own

fault or someone else's, are hungry and homeless. But there is only one Versailles and one Marly; and only one man who could have built them.

Attention is called to the human lives sacrificed in the construction of these colossal buildings. But the same people find it quite natural that millions of dollars and thousands of lives should be wasted in modern industry. Is not beauty, too, worth some sacrifice? No one is disturbed about a workman crushed to death in a mine or in the construction of a tunnel. But they grow sentimental about a workman or a mason who fell off the scaffolding at Versailles or who died there of malaria. The historians piously repeat the anecdote about the woman who insulted the King to his face because her son had died of a fall received "while he was working on the machines at Versailles," but not a word about the precautions taken both at Versailles and Marly to avoid accidents, and the care given to the health and nourishment of the workers. Neither do they mention the indemnities paid to the injured and to the families of those who were killed. There are a thousand evidences of the care the King took of his workmen and of his haste to right even the slightest injustice. In the "Comptes des Batiments," we find the following humble entry, which may well be used as an example. "Eleven livres to Barbe Cornet, whose burro was killed during the work at Marly."

Why are Barbe Cornet and his burro never referred to? But such questions are humiliating and ridiculous. Louis XIV made France a gift of matchless beauty. It is the very worst of taste to quibble over its price.

CHAPTER IV

LA FETE GALANTE

THE LIFE of pleasure which Louis XIV was able to achieve in its perfection only for brief moments during his reign found its supreme culmination in love and gallantry. Versailles, it has been said, was built for the royal mistresses; it might as truthfully be said that the most beautiful women of that age seemed born to adorn Versailles. The King piqued himself upon being a man of the world. He was gallant and eager for pleasure, he was both sensual and sentimental. The Spanish princess whom he had married gave him neither the affection nor the wit and intelligence he longed for. She was ugly, rather stupid, unhealthy, and spoke only broken French; it was not even sure that she would provide for the succession to the throne. Of her six children, only one, the Dauphin, lived. The others died almost at birth. One of them, a little girl prematurely born, was an abnormal creature, dark and hairy. With such a wife, it is not astonishing that one so highly-sexed as Louis XIV should have sought consolation in mistresses. He had several of them—fewer, however, than is generally believed—to the great scandal of everyone. Today people still seem scandalized.

Is such an attitude easily justifiable? There can be no question of proving the King virtuous. It is, of course, sinful to take a mistress; only penance duly administered and fulfilled may wipe out the sin. But without excusing him, it may be interesting to investigate the exact nature of Louis XIV's failing, to determine what were his relations with his mistresses and to investigate the reasons for his conduct.

Why is it, in the first place, that Louis XIV, alone among French kings, has drawn upon himself the indignation of these virtuous souls? He had mistresses, but his grandfather Henri IV had more of them than he. The *Vert Galant* paraded both his passing love affairs and his more permanent attachments with a casualness, a disdain for public opinion, and often with a cynicism that would have shocked his grandson. When he was fifty years old, his extravagant passion for the Princess de Condé almost involved France in a catastrophe. At that age Louis XIV had reformed. And yet, that rake who so scandalized his contemporaries is not disliked. Had Henri IV revoked the Edict of Nantes what a hue and cry there would be against that licentious monarch!

The same is true of François I and Henri II. The latter, who allowed himself to be led in leash by a former mistress of his father's and who was a loathsome husband, is looked upon almost with pity. Diane de Poitiers, that insatiable vampire, has become almost a legendary heroine. But Madame de Maintenon—who was regularly married to Louis XIV—oh, what a frightful wretch! Henri IV legitimatized his bastards with the utmost frankness, and that at a time when his action was likely to stir up dissen-

sion and lead to a struggle over the succession that might have culminated in a fearful war. He is forgiven. His indiscretions are scarcely mentioned. But ever since Saint Simon published his "Mémoires," the fact that Louis XIV legitimatized his bastards has been looked upon as an outrage against public morals. And the King had political as well as personal justification for his action.

Louis XIV did nothing his predecessors had not done. And what he did was done with a discretion, a respect for appearances, a care not to give rise to scandal that no impartial critic can fail to give him credit for.

Picture the difficulties that faced a King in those days when he attempted to conceal his personal affairs. Louis XIV realized that it was virtually impossible to do so. Yet though his failings were well known, he was careful not to offend against propriety. He showed no disregard for public opinion or convention. When he gave entertainments in honor of his mistresses, he was only following the current fashion and conforming to the code of gallantry. If the entertainment were given for La Vallière or Montespan, the fact was a secret. No doubt everyone at court knew the secret, but still it was supposedly known only to the two lovers. In doing this, they were merely following the dictates of contemporary romantic literature. No man could aspire to be considered gallant unless he paid public homage to the object of his passions. Yet ostensibly society had no idea for whom the serenades, the dinners, and concerts were given, or for whose ears the madrigals and sonnets were written.

Thus there was no defiance of convention in the King's conduct. He was quite the opposite of a debauchee or a swaggering rake. Doubtless his passionate nature made

him pay much attention to love. But, I repeat, he was usually one of the most temperate of men in everything. He had, moreover, few mistresses. It is an easy matter to name them all. Anyone who will honestly examine his own conscience will admit that Louis XIV was most restrained in his pleasures. Such youthful sowing of wild oats is never taken seriously. There is this difference between an ordinary individual and a king: with the former such oats remain unknown. The slightest fault on the part of the King stands out as bright as day. And lastly, as King, he should be the first to set a good example. He humbly admits this in his "Mémoires."

In this connection, we might note that most historians treat these "Mémoires" and Louis XIV's letters as of negligible value. In so doing they throw away priceless material. Even if Louis XIV is guilty, since when have judges refused to listen to the plea of the defendant? But these "Mémoires" are more than an apology for the King's life. They reveal the inner promptings that guided him in his political and private life. I, myself, know of no more clearcut and honest interpretation of the important policies and events of his reign than this masterly statement by the man who played the leading role in all of them. By depriving themselves of this commentary, modern historians have frequently paved the way for grave errors in their conclusions.

With the most laudable honesty and straightforwardness Louis XIV told his son: "I should have preferred not to mention this affair (his affair with La Vallière) as it is not a good example. But as I have drawn lessons from the shortcomings of others, I cannot very well deprive you of the lessons to be drawn from my own. First

of all, I would say that since a Prince should always be a model of virtue, he should take care not to give in to the weaknesses of ordinary men, the more so because he may rest assured that his indiscretions will not pass unnoticed. And if, in spite of ourselves, we fall into such errors, two precautions should be taken. I have always observed them myself and have found them very much worthwhile.

"First, the time devoted to making love should never be at the expense of business. Our first thought should always be toward the preservation of our glory and our power, and this may be done only by diligent attention to the affairs of State. However wrapped up we may be in our passion, we should remember that if we allow our own prestige to become lessened, this reflects upon the object of our affection; out of consideration for her we should avoid such a possibility.

"The second precaution is even more delicate and more difficult to practise. It is to remain *absolute master of your mind and will when you have bestowed your affections.* Do not allow your tenderness as a lover to influence your decisions as a monarch. A mistress must never be permitted to discuss State affairs or those who serve us. The two must be kept severely apart.

"You know how often I have warned you against the influence of favorites; a mistress is the most dangerous of all favorites."

These resolute statements, it might be noted, were actually written in 1667 or 1688 when the King's passion for Madame de Montespan was at its height. He himself did not actually write this passage. His own style is more vivid and spontaneous. But he provided the material for

the passage and revised it when it had been written. The reader may judge for himself whether or not Louis XIV was on his guard against being carried away by sudden bursts of sentiment or enthusiasm.

In his "Mémoires" Charles Perrault recounts a very significant anecdote in this regard. One day when Marshal de Villeroy, de Lionne, Marshal de Gramont, Colbert, and several others were present, the King said to them: "You are all friends; I am fonder of you and have more confidence in you than in any other men in the kingdom. I am young and women usually have a strong hold on a man of my age. I command each of you that if you notice a woman, any woman in the world, gaining control over me, you will tell me at once. *It will not take me twenty-four hours to rid myself of her,* and to satisfy you that I have done so." Twenty-four hours! What a statement! Throughout his life the King's fear of being controlled by his mistresses or his ministers amounted almost to a mania with him.

Whatever his shortcomings as a husband, he always treated his wife, the Queen, with the respect that he thought due the dignity of marriage. On the night of their marriage, her only request to him had been that he would never abandon her. He kept his word scrupulously. Every day, except when sick or in the country, he did his duty by this rather unattractive creature. His own pleasures were confined to a few hours in the evening or even, at times, the night. But he never deserted the marital bed. If the reader will forgive the intimacy of the detail, I would remark that even at the height of his passion for a mistress, he never stayed away all night.

Moreover he concealed his love affairs until they be-

came so well known that precaution was useless. One should not forget the secrecy that surrounded the birth of La Vallière's first children, nor that Madame de Montespan's first children were brought up with the utmost privacy in a house in the Rue de Vaugirard, mysteriously cared for by Madame de Maintenon!

Far from outraging public decency, the King, had he been so minded, could easily have been turned by those around him to debauchery. He was beset by temptations; the most beautiful women at Court were only too eager to attract him. To be singled out by the King was looked upon as a great honor; the fortunate person thus favored was envied by all her friends. "Brothers who are sticklers on points of honor," writes Bussy-Rabutin, "are overjoyed when their sisters are fortunate enough to be so favored." Louis XIV never pretended to be a saint, but he did his best to resist temptation. When he was a little boy, his tutor had made him translate the following maxim into Latin; beneath it he put his name, as if it were a solemn promise: "Whenever physical passion tempts me toward unchastity, I will resist its attraction to the best of my ability—Louis. *Quoties voluptas corporis me hortabitur ut renuntiem castitat, resistam fortiter ejus illecebris—Ludovicus.*" He always remembered that promise. Without attempting to make him out a ridiculous little saint, it must be admitted that he made very moderate use of the unlimited opportunities that were open to him.

Morally, his conduct was vastly superior to that of most of his contemporaries. A great many lords and noblemen lived in a state of drunkenness and debauchery. Despite the restrictions placed upon them by the King,

especially after his conversion, these conditions continued throughout the reign. A few pages from Saint Simon make very edifying reading in this regard. His "Mémoires" form an endless gallery in which there is a portrait of every known vice, and each in its most devilish aspect. One gives all his attention to drinking, another is an admitted gambler and crook, another ruined himself for women and drags out the remaining days of his life racked by the most filthy diseases and searching vainly for "cures." The women are even more blatant in their viciousness; they are drunkards, gamblers, habitués of houses of ill fame, and gluttons, dying in the full course of their filth and vice. What depravity there is even in the King's immediate household! One needs but recall his brother's habits and those of such of the favorites as Guiche, Vardes and Manicamp; of the two Vendômes or Marshal de Luxembourg. At first the King may have shown a certain tolerant indulgence for their debauchery. But never, at any period, did he permit blasphemy and impiety to be added to debauchery, never libertinism such as that of a Don Juan.

It will be recalled how vigorously he disciplined Bussy-Rabutin, Philippe Mancini, Guiche, Manicamp and the other young mad-caps who, among a thousand other escapades, baptized a sucking pig and thrashed a magistrate on Good Friday. Bussy denies the baptism of the pig. But he and his friends were quite capable of it. In his "Mémoires" he recounts a host of indecent anecdotes, some of which are quite as bad as the dinner at Roissy. There is, for instance, the gruesome scene during the siege of Lérida, in 1646. It appears that after spending the night drinking and revelling in a Capuchin Monastery, some of

the young soldiers, among them the Marquis de Barbentane, decided to top off the evening by going down to the cemetery, which had been smashed up during the siege, and desecrating the tombs of the monks. Barbentane took from the coffin the mummified corpse of a monk in his robe and, holding it in his arms, began a diabolic dance to the accompaniment of fifes and fiddles. A few moments later, as he was going up to the trenches, he was struck dead by an enemy's bullet.

During the period when Louis XIV was personally in charge of the government, such events were rare. But debauchery did not entirely cease. In a letter dated 1680, this same Bussy, doubtless overjoyed to find people even more foul than himself, describes another scene that is positively scandalous and revolting. It occurred in a brothel in Paris. It is impossible to give the details, except to note the fact that the Duke de La Ferté-Biron, the Chevalier Colbert, and the Marquis d'Argenson were all present. Their only excuse was that they were dead drunk. "When the King heard about it, he commanded Monsieur de Louvois to tell the Duke de La Ferté that his infamous conduct merited severe punishment; he warned Monsieur de Colbert that if his son were guilty of any further disorder he would exile him from the kingdom for life. Argenson fled. Monsieur Colbert imprisoned his son and thrashed him outrageously."

Never did the King indulge in such orgies or in anything vaguely approaching them. As far as possible he resisted the often disgraceful manners and customs of his contemporaries. If one compares his conduct to theirs, one is forced to praise his restraint, his propriety and his admirable dignity. When he was admitting his indiscre-

tions to his son, he added: "In your dying hour—which may perhaps arrive far sooner than you expect—God will not ask whether you have been sober, equitable, and have respected social conventions, but whether you have respected his commandments." In the seventeenth century few men were more sober, more equitable or had greater respect for convention than he.

And yet there is no question but that his conduct caused great scandal. That is because of the remorseless persistence with which his enemies both in France and in foreign countries slandered and disparaged him. Journalists and pamphleteers, foreigners and Protestants, all did their worst. One should not forget that numerous ephemeral and either satiric or erotic works were surreptitiously circulated during the King's own lifetime. Written by either mischievous or obscene men, they pictured him as a hopeless reprobate who spent the day in the arms of his mistresses. So well did they do their work that today sensational novelists have no other conception of him. Moreover the ecclesiastical reproof administered from the pulpits at the Louvre, Saint Germain and Versailles, the bold, if discreet, admonitions of the clergy, have left him under a cloud. The Church shows great forbearance in her condemnation of sinners, but the eloquence of her ministers is at times greater than their mercy.

THE blackening of Louis XIV's reputation is due not merely to the activities of satirists, pamphleteers and, indirectly, preachers. Most historians have contributed to it. Voltaire, with his shrewdness and his great good sense, is almost the only one to take a sensible view of the King's love affairs. The most common mistake of these austere

critics is to judge Louis XIV as if he were an individual and not to take into consideration the very unusual circumstances in which he was placed. For the most part these plodding, well-meaning moralists become more and more amusing as they become entangled in the meshes of the psychology of love.

Yes, in his youth he was doubtless very strongly influenced by physical passion. He was in despair over it. With tears in his eyes, he admitted to his mother that he could not restrain his passions. The best he could do was to promise his wife that after he was thirty he would reform; it took him ten years longer to do so. But highly sexed as he was, what he wanted most of all were sympathy and someone in whom he could confide. He wished to feel himself loved for himself alone; he wanted someone to whom he could pour out his soul. After the disillusionment that resulted from his experience with Marie Mancini, he found it hard to believe in the disinterested affection of women. For a moment, La Vallière had his confidence. For him this was a true re-birth of love. But he was really in love only once, and then with Marie Mancini. His love for Louise was the mere ghost of his former love. And yet he loved her, too, in a way. In her company he once more experienced the ecstasy, the tears and all of the magnificent and romantic sentiments "that had made his adventure with Marie so poetic."

His love for La Vallière lasted as long as such fiery and impetuous emotions ever last. La Vallière would have had to be brilliantly witty to hold the King. Although she was far from stupid, she lacked the quick-wittedness and the intelligence that he so loved. To please him, she read widely and even studied the same learned subjects that

Marie Mancini had studied. Foolhardy as she was, she enlisted the aid of her unreliable friend, Madame de Montespan, whose charming wit she constantly praised in the presence of the King. That was the end of her.

Yet the King did love her. He liked to talk to Athénais but to make love to Louise. Hence his great difficulty in breaking off with her. People have great indulgence for geniuses, for men like Hugo and Chateaubriand, who think they have the right to ask women to sacrifice themselves for them and to share with them their love. Why—without whitewashing Louis XIV—do they refuse him the benefit of such indulgence? Like so many other great men, he seems to have told his lover: "Since I love you, and you have confidence in my affection for you, allow me to amuse myself as my whims and my need for intellectual stimulus dictate. I will always return to you." Such a programme might intrigue a young King in the flush of fashion, whose head had been slightly turned by the flattery he received and by his glorious dreams for the future. But a woman is never willing to share her lover—even if it be with glory or the poetic muse. For a long time Louis did his best to reconcile these conflicting desires and to maintain their ambiguous relationship.

In the end he sacrificed La Vallière—with anguish in his heart, perhaps, for there were tears, many tears on both sides. But was he cruel, as is charged? Historians have made up their minds on this subject before undertaking their investigation. La Vallière, to them, is the defenceless victim; the King a detestable seducer, rather dull-witted and frightfully egotistical.

I cannot endorse such a hasty verdict. I hark back to that quality in the King which is so frequently in evidence

—his fear of wounding anyone or of causing pain. "The King has never intentionally made anyone of any rank suffer," wrote Primi Visconti. It is noticeable that every quotation that has been used to demonstrate the King's harshness in his treatment of her is either from a pamphlet or an erotic novel quite without value as an historic document. One is astonished that historians would stoop to such means.

On the other hand, all the historic documents that relate to the affairs are favorable to him. They are, unfortunately, few in number. We know very little about the amorous psychology of the King, about the manner in which he made love. One would like to see the volumes of letters he wrote Marie Mancini, La Vallière, and Madame de Maintenon; the latter, unfortunately, had the grim courage to burn hers. Louis XIV was fully conscious that a King should write as few letters as possible, but even so he was most loquacious in these youthful passions. What would one not give for a glimpse at the letters or notes written amid the bustle of a military camp, which Colbert so mysteriously transmitted to La Vallière? It is needless to remark that scholars have explored every nook and corner of this field. We have full details about the marriage licenses of the royal mistresses, and their clothes and jewels. But we have no information on the main point, on the nature of the feelings his lovers aroused in him and the evolution of his affection for them. One is forced to rely upon vague conjectures and the interpretation of a few definitely established facts.

We must state once more that beyond a doubt Louis did love La Vallière; what he most demanded in return were

faithfulness and a loyalty that could be absolutely depended upon. They almost quarrelled because La Vallière did not wish to tell him about the secret love affair between Madame and de Vardes, which she had given her word of honor not to mention. They had promised to have no secrets from each other.

In exchange for giving herself body and soul to the King, Louise asked only his heart, but she wanted all of that; she would not share it. She asked for no money except for her brother and for her children. For herself she wished nothing. Astonishment is expressed that her lover let her live in her wretched quarters at Madame's for so long. But they forget that La Vallière was a maid of honor, and that the King could not have removed her without giving rise to scandal. When she became pregnant and there was no way to conceal her condition, he installed her in the Hotel Brion, near the garden of the Palais Royal and gave her a house of her own. Later he made her Duchess of Vaujours and bought her a chateau and a country estate, not to mention the mansion near the Tuileries. It was certainly a tradition among French Kings to maintain their mistresses magnificently. But Louis XIV treated his mistresses, and especially La Vallière, not merely generously, but with a gallantry and a consideration that his contemporaries were not slow to remark and to appreciate. In a letter to Bussy-Rabutin about La Vallière, Madame de Scudéry praised the King's conduct and even the way in which he broke off their relations. "*He has a respect for those whom he has loved* that your grand gentleman would ordinarily never have for a lady he no longer loved, even if she were as faithful as the Duchess."

It was not an unusual thing for these "grand gentlemen" to live on their mistresses. "In Paris," writes Primi-Visconti, "there are more than twenty thousand gentlemen who either live by gambling or off women or else get their own living by their wits." It was a long-established tradition for such men to be kept by women. There is an amusing—and enlightening—anecdote in the "Mémoires" of Marshal de Gramont in which that great nobleman tells of his debut at Court. He was quite shabby when he arrived in Paris on an old nag and accompanied by a Basque valet. "Every morning he would walk to the Poitrincourt academy" for his riding lesson. He dined on a crust of bread in a room "lighted by a very smoky lamp," as he had no candle. But it was not long before a lady of quality, noting his good looks, singled him out, equipped him—and he was on the road to fortune. Naturally, there was no question of Louis XIV's being supported by his mistresses, but he did not stint himself in showering them with riches. The young fops about the Court could have learned many lessons from the consideration and respect he showed them.

He has been reproached for the clandestine confinements of La Vallière, for the fact that he was not present at these tragic moments, for his cruelty, as it were. To make such a charge is to forget that the King was not an individual. He was not master of his own time. He had to dispose of himself according to the exactions of Court etiquette; often he had to do things against his wishes. If the King was supposed to go for a walk or a hunt while his mistress was in the throes of childbirth, he had no right to give up his walk or the hunt and hasten to her bedside. When, in October, 1666, La Vallière gave birth to her

daughter, Mademoiselle de Blois, in a room in the chateau at Vincennes where anyone who wished could walk in, it was in accordance with her specific request. It would have been a perfectly simple matter for her to have remained at home. At that time she had two residences in Paris and a summer home at Versailles. The most elementary consideration for propriety would have prompted her to conceal her condition and not leave her own house, especially as there was no Court duty that required her presence at Vincennes. She was no longer a maid of honor to Madame and had not yet been made Duchess. She came to Vincennes at such a time merely because she was mad with jealousy and wished to pursue her lover. She had noted the King's growing fondness for Montespan and realized already that her rival would eventually supplant her. To win back his heart she was ready to do anything; she had no compunctions at creating a scandal.

This was clearly demonstrated a year later at the siege of Avesnes when she came once more to claim her lover before the eyes of the Queen and the Court. This time she created a frightful scandal. The scene is well-known. La Vallière "sending her carriage at full gallop across the field" toward the King, while the Queen, "very angry," wished to stop her. After the cold reception she received at the hands of the King, she might better have retired to her chateau at Vaujours to conceal her chagrin. Instead, she settled down at Saint Germain to annoy the King and Montespan. She was a living reproach to them both —and she fully intended to regain her unfaithful lover. It was in such circumstances that she gave birth to another child. The King was convinced that the infant was not his and would not acknowledge it. Imagine the rage,

the regret of the girl that she had not kept her personal affairs to herself!

In discussing this whole episode historians in general have shown the most disconcerting lack of intelligence; they have overlooked the most obvious facts, have forgotten the most elementary conventions. They seem bound at all costs to prove that Louis XIV was a detestable man and La Vallière an angel who suffered martyrdom!

The truth is that for years La Vallière was doing all she could to recover the King's favor. It was for that reason that she retained her apartment at Court when there was no longer any reason for her to be there. Doubtless had she expressed a desire to retire to her place in the country immediately upon her break with the King, he would willingly have given his consent, only too glad to be rid of such a bothersome mistress. But she insisted on staying on. Montespan, a practical soul who had great respect for convention, soon decided that things were better as they were. Had La Vallière, acknowledged mistress of the King and mother of his children, suddenly retired, it would have attracted too much attention to the break between them and would have been bound to expose his new alliance to the eyes of the world.

Thus Louise became a convenience to the two lovers! She kept their connection from being known, mystified the Court, and allayed the suspicions or the anger of Montespan's jealous husband. Louis always went to Montespan's room by way of La Vallière's apartment, and was generally supposed still to be in love with Louise.

It must be admitted that there is something unpleasant, even shocking, about these subterfuges. Was this hypocrisy? Not at all. The King always had the cour-

age of his vices. But when he could, he wished to preserve appearances. Even in this disorder, he wished to retain a certain dignity. And could such a ruler as Louis XIV have done otherwise? Adultery was a fault quite grave enough without adding to it public scandal. It was better to leave things as they were. La Vallière had an apartment at Court; she was a friend of Madame de Montespan. What a public confession of weakness on the King's part to leave the one and entangle himself with the other! What an opening for his detractors! Very well, then, if she was determined to stay, let her stay.

These are doubtless the reasons that prompted the King to act as he did. They are not very creditable, it is true, but in the circumstances he acted wisely. He was not the cruel torturer he is said to have been, who made his former mistress witness the triumph of her rival. The King's reputation of having been harsh to La Vallière is based largely upon licentious novels and unreliable gossip. There is for example the story of the little dog, told by the Princess Palatine. As Louis XIV was on his way to Montespan's room, he is said to have tossed Louise a little spaniel which had jumped against his legs and said "Here, madame! This is good enough company for you!"

This unpleasant anecdote is not substantiated in any way. It is more than probable that Louis XIV never made such a remark. He was too courteous thus to treat a woman whom he had loved and whom perhaps he still loved.

La Vallière brought disaster upon herself when she failed to resign herself to the fact that the King had abandoned her. She only entered the convent when she had abandoned all hope and she did it ostentatiously, with the ex-

press purpose of calling attention to the sinful state in which the King and her rival were living. Likewise when she fell on her knees before the Queen and asked forgiveness for the sorrow she had caused her, her contemporaries looked upon her action as the last dramatic gesture of a woman beside herself with jealousy. If she had been sinful, how much more so were Athénaïs and her lover, who were allied in a double adultery. Thus she flung in the face of the King and his mistress the guilt of her relations.

Louis XIV was not deceived by her first flight to the convent at Chaillot. He realized that this public repentance of La Vallière was an open reproach. He did not give her permission to enter a convent until he was fully convinced that she had a real vocation. Bossuet, who was given the direction of the penitent, felt that her vocation had been put off too long. "A person with more will power," he wrote to Marshal de Bellefords in 1673, "would have done it at once. . . . That is why I have felt rather strongly that we should make sure that she really means it, and that her ties with the world should be broken slowly, whereas a person with more will power than she had could have broken off sharply."

La Vallière did not enter the convent until a year later —seven years after her abandonment by the King. That brought upon her Montausier's blasting remark: "Madame, you have set us the most edifying example possible on this earth. I only wonder that a woman of your perception and intelligence should have taken so long to reach this pious decision." In truth, had she desired to take the veil after her break with the King, or after she had

provided for her children, no power on earth could have prevented her from doing so.

As a matter of fact, Louise de La Vallière was a passionate lover who gave up love with the greatest reluctance. She was, for a fickle lover, the most troublesome of mistresses. "From the moment I love you, I challenge you to love me!" Such is the eternal fallacy of passion. How can these modern apostles of "sincerity" in love find fault with Louis XIV because he broke away from a mistress whom he no longer loved? His apology is that he always paid her the greatest respect and was even fond of her to the end. The impure love of Montespan often made him long for the frank and unselfish affection of Louise. Whatever may be said, he was so used to her gentle presence that he was deeply grieved when she fled to the convent at Chaillot. He wept with joy upon her return, and when she definitely took the veil, he wept again.

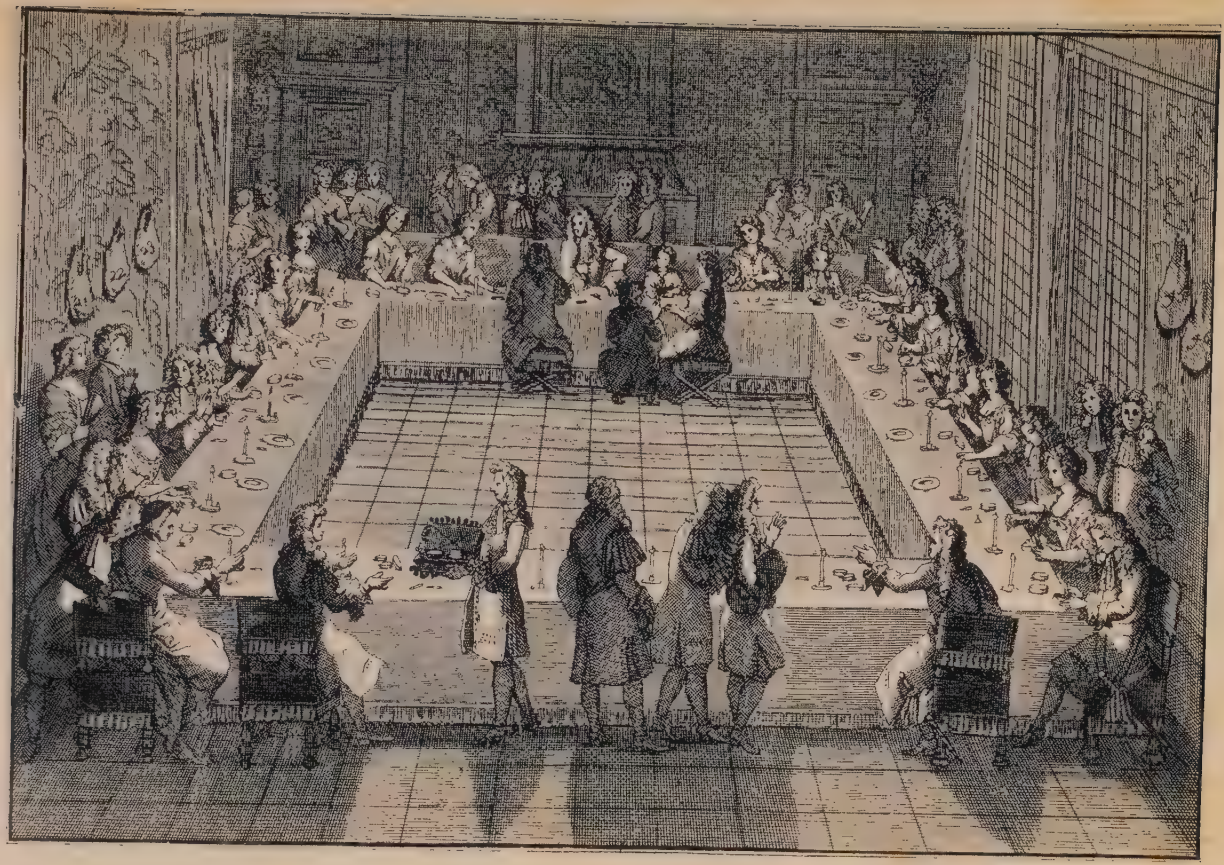
Louis XIV, we should never forget, loved lofty sentiments. No matter what is said to the contrary, he was tenderhearted. His treatment of his mistresses is in pleasant contrast to the brutality displayed by most of his contemporaries. Bussy-Rabutin somewhere tells a revolting story of the Duke de Caderousse, a reckless gambler who pretended to be in love with Madame de Bertillac and was supported by her. She had to pawn her jewels to pay his gambling debts. In a brothel Caderousse boasted publicly of the way in which he had plundered her. As he was doing so his mistress, who was hidden in an alcove, overheard him. Overwhelmed by such cynicism and depravity, she fainted and was carried dying to

her house. Four days later she was dead. "You would never believe," adds Bussy, "into what disrepute this action brought Caderousse."

How sad and gloomy this life of gallantry! Beneath the surface how tragic, how repugnant it was! When Montespan succeeded La Vallière in the King's favor, he suffered the tortures of the damned.

He was thirty years old when the Marquise de Montespan bewitched him and his passions were at their height. She had the soul and the instincts of a courtesan. The Queen called her, "*That whore!*" It must be admitted that she chose the right word. Diabolically beautiful, she increased her charms by every artifice known to her profession. She was a brunette with blue eyes but the King preferred blondes, so she bleached her hair a golden blonde. We notice, indeed, that all of his mistresses except Marie Mancini had either blonde or auburn hair. According to Primi Visconti, "she was massaged with perfumes and pomades for two or there hours each day, while she lay stretched out naked on her bed." Even so she was an extremely slovenly woman—not that one is surprised by that. "La Vallière was extremely fastidious," writes the ever serious Princess Palatine, "and Montespan dirty." Her sister, Madame de Thianges, whom Saint Simon pictures to us with a plaster and a silk patch over her eye and a bib under her chin, was a hideous old hag.

Like most courtesans, Montespan had an insatiable greed for money and favors. She was eager for power, first of all over the King. To achieve this with as proud a man as he, she realized that she must resort to violent methods.



LOTTERY IN THE ROYAL APARTMENT AT VERSAILLES

She bullied him with frequent scenes in which she burst into floods of reproaches and jealousy; she would mortify him in every way that her infernal mind could invent. Thoroughly depraved, she would stop at nothing. She had in her all the powers of evil, and she made them serve her unbridled ambition. She claimed to be a descendant of the Dukes of Aquitaine, an older house than the Bourbons, and treated Louis XIV as an equal. She hoped to be Queen of France.

She attracted the King both by her person and by her nimble wit. Not only did she intoxicate him with lust, but she resorted to the most despicable means to drive him wild with passion and had aphrodisiacs put in his drinks. As a result this man, usually so steady, so well balanced, became under Montespan's rule, subject to fits of passion that sent him flying from one mistress to another. This important fact has always been passed over in silence. For years Montespan literally poisoned Louis XIV's system with these love potions.

In view of this, it is surprising, not that the King was dissolute, but that he was relatively sober and circumspect during this period.

Besides the hold she had on him through passion, she tied him to her through their numerous progeny. She had seven children. Were they all by him? The worst suspicions are justifiable where a creature of this kind is concerned. In the mythological paintings at Versailles, this eternally pregnant woman was represented as Latona the lover of the Sun God and the symbol of fertility. As a result of the number of children she bore she became hopelessly fat. "She was so stout," writes Primi Visconti, "that one day when she was getting out of her car-

riage, I noticed that her leg was as large around as my body." Surrounded by her seven brats, she constantly humiliated the Queen, all of whose children had died in infancy except the Dauphin, a chubby youngster who seemed dull and stupid compared with the brilliant Duke de Maine. There was a time when Montespan thought she was going to substitute her own offspring for those of Marie Thérèse on the throne of France. But most of all she held the King, or at least thought she held him, by witchcraft. She was an adept at sorcery and poisoning. For more than fifteen years she was in constant contact with Voisin. Little by little she poisoned, or attempted to poison, all of her rivals from La Vallière down to poor little Fontanges, "beautiful as an angel and stupid as a dunce." Finally she decided to poison the King himself. Imagine his horror and amazement when he learned of this dastardly project. That was the end, as far as he was concerned. He never forgave her. At last his eyes were opened to her enormities and he saw her as she was. She revealed to him the powers of evil in all their hideousness. In the leering, lascivious eyes of this infernal woman he recognized the Devil incarnate. And yet to save his face, to preserve his dignity, and out of respect for her children, whom he had formally acknowledged and legitimatized, for several years he allowed this monster to stay on in the palace.

This dramatic episode doubtless hastened the King's conversion. But a mysterious event that had happened some time before had prepared him for it. La Fare, in his "Mémoires," has recounted the story. Before reading the following anecdote, it is well to remember that La Fare was a rake and a trouble maker. "At heart the

King had always been timorous and religious. One day he happened to pass a priest who was carrying the Blessed Sacrament to one of the officers at Versailles. To set a good example he accompanied it to the dying man's bedside. The scene struck him so forcibly that he could not resist confiding to his mistress how uneasy his conscience was. She told him that she too was repentant, so they decided to separate."

Such things don't happen quite as simply as La Fare seems to think. But the meeting of Louis XIV with the Blessed Sacrament in the halls of the Palace at Versailles was a singular, perhaps a providential occurrence, the consequences of which were far-reaching. The tragic and terrifying contrast of Life and Death which greeted his eyes at the bedside of this dying man suddenly struck the King and he realized the emptiness of his own life, the vanity of the pagan illusion of happiness into which he had slipped in the intoxication of his early loves. This delightfully pleasant life he had been leading was a snare and a delusion. It was time to devote his attention to more important matters—and toward the one, the only thing that is supremely important.

And yet—and this must be thoroughly understood—this frivolous life, all these elaborate entertainments were, as I have said before, merely diversions for Louis XIV. Their only importance was that they concealed his preparations for war and caused the European statesmen to mis-estimate him. He never gave time to his mistresses that should be devoted to the affairs of State; the nation came first; the King proclaimed himself the first of its servants. The nation demanded an energetic, progressive ruler. With the greatest discretion, not wishing to dis-

turb the peace of Europe out of regard for his mother and for his father-in-law, the King of Spain—Louis XIV bided his time. Finally in 1664 Philip IV died, to be followed to the grave two years later by Anne of Austria. There was no longer anything to restrain him. During the five or six years of waiting he had accumulated great reserves, both of men and of money, and had a large army ready to take the field. At last the time had come to complete the unification of the nation, and to give it its true frontiers. The most foreseeing and intelligent of his subjects were demanding this of him.

PART FOUR

BETWEEN EAGLE AND LION

"Thanks to the success of his arms and of his various projects, he made the monarchy so strong that historians in the future will never be able to appreciate the magnitude of his accomplishment, even when they have before them the testimony of his contemporaries."—*Relations des Ambassadeurs de Venise, Series III, France, volume III, page 495.*

CHAPTER I

FRANCE IS AVENGED

AT the chateau of Versailles, as in mediæval cathedrals, there is a host of symbolic figures. On each side of the gilded grill-work at the entrance to the court are massive pillars upon which are grouped allegorical figures. Their meaning is lost to the modern spectator, but to Louis XIV and his contemporaries it was obvious, and most thrilling.

The group to the right, the work of Marsy, represents a winged Victory seated on the shoulder of a kneeling giant. In one hand she holds a crown, the other is outstretched to receive a sheaf of palms which a Cupid is holding out to her. She is surrounded with captured flags, and cuirasses. Her foot rests upon the wing of an eagle which she has crushed to earth. The other group, which was done by Girardon, has almost the same composition. The same winged Victory in the same pose, but in the outstretched hand the crown is raised higher in the air. The arms of the giant upon whom she is seated are pinioned to his side. Her feet rest upon the paw and neck of a lion which lies cowed before her. Both groups are executed with great nobility and restraint; in no way are they crude or animated by hatred or brutal arrogance.

They are dignified and polished expressions of two glorious deeds in French history, nothing more.

The group on the right is symbolic of France's victory over the German Eagle; that on the left, of her victory over the Lion of Castile. At this time Spain and the Empire were the two chief enemies of France. Louis XIV's two principal political policies were to reduce first the one and then the other to a condition where they would no longer be a danger to him. Thus these two groups of statues are, as it were, the triumphant portals to the history of his age. They sum up in themselves the persistent efforts of a nation directed by a man of genius who had the strength of mind to achieve his ambition.

But let us put allegory aside and look at facts.

Louis XIV had but to turn to a map of Europe to realize the dual nature of the problem that confronted him. His first task was to dislodge Spain from those inherited possessions through which, though scarcely a European power, she was able practically to encircle France. Moreover, it was necessary to break her union with the Empire —an alliance which had already proved its power and which was now threatening France and all Europe. As a result of it, our northeastern border, the most vulnerable of all our frontiers, was constantly threatened. Our first line of defence scarcely reached to the Somme; the valley of the Oise was unprotected and Paris ever at the mercy of an invader. Flanders, Franche-Comté, and Roussillon were centres for anti-French espionage and intrigue; while in Franche-Comté, Germany had already a foothold upon our soil. Today we are prone to forget that what are now the border provinces of France—Brabant, Hainault, Limbourg, Luxembourg, Franche-Comté—were all prac-

tically controlled by the Empire, although they were supposedly under the sovereignty of the King of Spain. When Louis XIV laid seige to Besançon, the inhabitants protested, claiming that they were an Imperial city. To France, Germany and Spain were one and the same enemy; they were the two heads of the German eagle. Upon the accession of Charles V to the Imperial throne they were united under the same ruler for a time. His successors maintained this German-Spanish union and the connection between them grew closer as a result of intermarriages with each succeeding reign. The King of Spain, who still laid claim to the title of Duke of Burgundy, was practically a vassal of the Emperor.

But in the second half of the seventeenth century, the two colleagues, His Catholic Majesty, and the successor of the Cæsars, even when united, cut a poor figure when contrasted to His Most Christian Majesty, Louis XIV. Neither country alone would have proved formidable, although, as Colbert admitted, Spain was still the richest country in the world. Under a more competent government, she might have hired large armies and purchased the support of every nation in Europe. But united, the Empire and Spain could at least form powerful coalitions and, in the last analysis, paralyze all French action. Louis XIV's principal problem was to prevent such coalitions, or to make himself powerful enough to resist them.

But even supposing that Spain and the Empire were to remain for the moment peaceful, there was always the fear that, either together or separately, they would try to regain what they had lost by the treaties of Munster and the Pyrenees. And France was unprotected on her northern and eastern borders! It was impossible to be resigned

to such a condition. Frenchmen can never be sufficiently grateful to Louis XIV for having realized this. Only the most superficial historian would attribute these wars to the King's desire for "glory"; the very existence of the nation was bound up in them; from them came the frontiers that were ours by right and by necessity.

There is little significance in Louis XIV's constant references to his "glory"; he knew full well how much importance to attach to such words. Moreover, he was a master at concealing important undertakings under light and frivolous appearances. This pretended frivolity was one of the great forces behind his foreign policy.

It is amazing that historians do not seem to realize this; that even Frenchmen should refer to the campaigns of Louis XIV as wars of conquest, whereas they were really only defensive wars. In the seventeenth century Frenchmen realized full well that sooner or later they would have to free themselves from the double threat that hung forever over their heads. They must defeat the Eagle and the Lion, or, at least, teach them to keep their distance.

Let us attempt to understand the workings of the King's mind when he assumed personal control of the government and, assisted by Le Tellier, Louvois, and Lionne, set out to formulate a foreign policy. What was his frame of mind? What considerations influenced him?

He made little attempt to conceal his disdain for the Empire. And in truth, since the treaty of Westphalia, Germany had not played a very brilliant role in European politics. The Emperor's personal position was hardly more enviable. The German Diet paid slight attention

to his orders; he had to devote all his attention to the struggle with the Turks who were at the gates of his capital; his reserves both in men and money were very low. His Most Christian Majesty was naturally somewhat supercilious toward this poor elective ruler who had the temerity to claim precedence over the King of France, an hereditary monarch and legitimate heir to Charlemagne's kingdom. For in the final analysis, Charlemagne had been Emperor of the Franks, and not of Germany. Shortly before the War of the Spanish Succession a book was published under the auspices of the French government entitled: "Des Justes Prétentions du Roi sur l'Empire." In it are found the following lines which reflect an attitude then very popular: "Most of Germany is the rightful inheritance of the King of France. *Charlemagne ruled Germany not as Emperor, but as King of France.*" In his "Instructions au Dauphin" Louis XIV took great pains to explain his own views on this subject. In reference to some quibbling on the part of the Emperor over a matter of etiquette he wrote: "Such ridiculous vanity prompts me to remark that these emperors, about whom we read so much in modern histories, have lost the glory and prestige boasted by those of their predecessors from whom we are descended. The Empire is in a sad state. When the title of Emperor was borne by our House, it included sovereignty over France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and a large part of Spain. The splendor of this dignity was first diminished by the partition of the Empire between the Sons of France. Soon the breaking away of that branch of the House which reigned beyond the Rhine lost that country to us. For, once the Germans had separated from us, they made haste

to exclude us from our rightful inheritance and made the office of Emperor elective."

Thus, he argues, the German Empire is really an encroachment upon the prerogatives of the French crown. In the hands of the usurpers the imperial dignity has been so dissipated that it is only a faint shadow of what it once was: "For," continues the King, "that part of Germany which is now under the sway of the Emperors is but a fragment of the former Empire of the West. Their important decisions must be referred to the States General; their election is subject to the embarrassment of intrigue and to whatever restrictions their electors see fit to impose upon them; most of the states nominally under them are subject to the immediate control of local rulers. . . . Even the cities in which their power is greatest have privileges that amount almost to complete freedom; if the emperors did not possess hereditary lands of their own, their title would be almost purely imaginary." Louis XIV concludes, not without pride: "Therefore, my son, I see no reason why the Kings of France, hereditary kings who can boast that nowhere in the world is there a better House than theirs, nor one more powerful or endowed with more absolute authority—why such kings should be considered inferior to elective Princes."

"The vain rivalry of autocrats!" it will be said. But the question had its larger aspects. What was at stake was not a mere matter of precedence; it was a question of the rights of France as opposed to those of Germany.

The Empire, as it was under the Germans, had only the vaguest similarity to the Roman Empire, which it claimed to succeed. In truth, the great Empire was dead. It was the task of France to revive it—and that solely by force

of arms, without invoking feudal rights. Curiously, for a time at the beginning of the reign of Louis XIV not only was there a strong imperialistic movement in France, but ancient Rome became fashionable, as was the case later, at the time of David and the Revolution. The emblems of Imperial and Republican Rome were revived. Everywhere, over doorways and triumphal arches, in painting and sculpture, one saw the old Roman standards with the traditional SPQR, the sculptured bucrania, the trophies of helmet and shield. The King was represented as a Roman Emperor, with the sandals and breastplate of the Vatican Augustus. The artists seemed bent on rejecting everything that might recall the Middle Ages. No more escutcheons or heavy crowns; no more heraldic animals. The King's coat of arms was reduced to three symbolic *fleurs de lys*. His emblem was usually a blazing Sun. It was all well enough for the Germans or the Spaniards to retain such out-dated Gothic rubbish, absurd vestiges of a moribund barbarism. The great King of France went back of the Middle Ages and revived the great tradition of the Western world; he returned to the great currents of thought and of civilization, instituted by Greece and Rome. He was the Sun God or Apollo in a much truer sense than he was a ruler to be symbolized by the *fleur de lys*.

Wherever possible the King, like his artists, rebelled against the traditions of the Middle Ages. He hated feudalism because it dismembered the Empire. He was intent upon restoring unity. In opposing Germany and Spain it was really feudalism that he was combating.

Yet, to restore unity, this practical, subtle Latin was quite willing to make full use of the ramifications of feu-

dalism with its complicated system of fiefs; by means of it he was able to claim certain territories and bring them back under the power of the crown. Louis XIV, the most modern of rulers, became a mediæval suzerain when it was to the interest of France that he should do so. He brought about the ruin of feudalism through feudalism itself. This is a good example of his flexibility, his skill in adapting himself to the necessities of a given situation without worrying about the apparent inconsistency of his stand.

Such was Louis XIV's attitude and such were his ideas as he prepared for the forthcoming struggle against Germany. To his mind, the Empire must disappear—or at least it must be divided into so many petty factions as to render it harmless. The Empire of the Franks should resume its natural boundaries. To the North and the East this natural boundary was the Rhine.

Such projects were not the gigantic creations of Louis XIV's mind. For a hundred years the whole tendency of French foreign policy had been in this direction. Foreigners had realized this. They thought of Louis XIV as a man lucky enough to be able to carry out plans that his predecessors had lacked the opportunity to execute. In a pamphlet that appeared during the war in Flanders, entitled: "*Le Bouclier d'Etat et de Justice, contre le dessein manifestement découvert de la monarchie universelle,*" the Baron de Lisola, an inhabitant of Franche-Comté and devoted to Spain and the Empire, refers to His Most Christian Majesty as a mere pupil of his grandfather, Henri IV, following out directions that had been handed down to him. "He is accomplishing by force of arms the projects first conceived by that great King." Con-

temporaries even credited Henri IV with the idea of "establishing France behind her original boundaries. To the east he planned to extend the kingdom to the Rhine, to the south, as far as the Pyrenees, and to the ocean on the north. . . . He considered that all who spoke French were the rightful subjects of the King of France." And yet Henri IV has never been accused of megalomania or of a passion for conquest! Why such severity toward the man who inherited his political policies as well as his crown? The best-informed and most prudent men in the kingdom were heartily in favor of the King's plans. In his "Histoire," Mézeray himself, exact and prosaic Mézeray, states that France should regain possession of the territory included in ancient Gaul. In upholding the rights of his wife to French Flanders by the force of French arms, Louis XIV was only following the express desires of the nation. He devoted to this task the care and restraint natural to a man of his prudent temperament.

The Spanish problem was even more complicated and delicate. Louis XIV had to avenge insults both to the nation and to himself. France demanded revenge for a long series of humiliations that had been inflicted upon us by our southern neighbors.

The King's grievances and complaints against the Spanish were many and ancient. For more than a century their behavior towards us had been characterized by violence and bad faith—the captivity of Francis I, the insolence of Charles V, the attempts of Philip II and his successors to dismember France, their constant plots to stir up civil war, the attempt of the League to give the crown of France to His Catholic Majesty. The hand of Spain

was to be seen in any disturbance within the kingdom. During the Fronde the Baron de Watteville, another inhabitant of Franche-Comté, had entered into relations and had even treated with the rebels in Bordeaux in the name of the King of Spain. The Madrid government was trying to induce the southern provinces to break away and thus to disrupt the kingdom. The Parlement of Paris and the Princes, who more than once had betrayed their country, all but cast their lot with the Spaniards.

Moreover, one must not forget that despite her victories in the field and the favorable Treaty of the Pyrenees, France was still encircled by countries that were either allied to the Empire or were vassals of it. With her outposts in Sicily and Naples, Spain could at any time assert her mastery over the western Mediterranean. Through her hold on Milan she dominated northern Italy. In Franche-Comté, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands she had a foothold within our boundaries. Thus she was in a position to cause us constant annoyance. She was always spying on us and meddling in our private affairs. Her diplomats and governors came and went as they pleased across France. It was necessary to grant them passports and frequently guards of honor. In accordance with some rather vague agreement we had to entertain a host of officials who were punctilious in all matters of official etiquette and precedence. Yet these troublesome guests often did not even bother to be polite.

One gains much insight into the procedure of these conceited Castilians from the account in the Grande Mademoiselle's "Mémoires" of the reception of Don Juan of Austria by the Queen Mother. "The Queen," we are told, "gave him her hand in Spanish fashion. She spoke

only Spanish to him. Bastard though he was, she addressed him as 'nephew.' After they had talked alone for a few minutes, she turned toward Monsieur and me (we were standing behind her), and said, 'My son!' He moved one foot slightly—for you certainly could not term his gesture a bow. At this exhibition of haughtiness, Monsieur and I were very sorry that we had put ourselves out for him."

The next day Monsieur offered him his personal guard to accompany him to the fair. The bastard passed in front of the booth in which Monsieur and Mademoiselle were without deigning to speak to them. The frank and rather vain daughter of Gaston d'Orléans cannot refrain from adding: "That surprised us. He should certainly have stopped long enough to thank Monsieur for doing him the honor of lending him his guards. He might also have found it possible to pay his respects to me."

The King had no more patience with such haughtiness than his subjects. He was tired of hearing his mother, who was Spanish at heart, constantly praise Spain and all that was Spanish. She harped continually on the subject. There is a well known anecdote about a quarrel between the King and Queen when the Court was on its way to Lyons, in 1658. Mademoiselle, who was in the same coach with Their Majesties, has given us a very striking and very enlightening sketch of the scene. The young King boasted that he would like to put an end to the war between France and Spain by a personal combat at arms with his uncle and shouted in a loud voice that the members of the House of Austria were all cowards.

What irritated him the most, personally, was the way the Spaniards had mortified and humiliated him at his mar-

riage. The others in his party had suffered from their insufferable arrogance quite as much as he. The Spanish Grandees thought themselves superior to the nobles of all other countries. It was as though they had drawn a line between themselves and all other human beings. At the conference on the Ile des Faisans, Don Luis de Haro claimed precedence over Mazarin, in spite of his being a Prince of the Church. "In support of his point," records Brienne, "the Cardinal cited the dignity of his rank and the usual rules of etiquette. Don Luis held that it was not as a Cardinal that he was carrying on these negotiations, but as a minister of the King of France. Not seeing how to maintain his own dignity nor that of his master, Mazarin agreed under protest to equality between them, but insisted it should not be considered a precedent." Such endless quibbling had set Frenchmen's nerves on edge.

As for Louis XIV, personally, they began with a great deal of open talk about the honor that was being done him in allowing him to marry an Infanta of Spain. Then they pretended to hesitate whether to give her to him or not. When the marriage contract was finally accepted in Madrid, they thought of a host of reasons for postponing it. They used every conceivable ruse to annoy the French.

In September 1659 the King arrived in Bordeaux to marry his cousin. But the terms of the contract had not yet been agreed upon. Don Luis de Haro kept raising a thousand problems daily, each one more knotty than the last. Louis XIV was forced to cool his heels pending the settlement of the marriage contract. They constantly threatened to break off the negotiations. While his minister was engaged in his controversies with the sly Castilian,

Louis was forced to spend almost a year wandering from Bordeaux to Toulouse, from Toulouse to Avignon, Aix, and Toulon, awaiting the pleasure of His Catholic Majesty. Finally the diplomats came to an agreement and the date of the marriage was set for June of the coming year.

But the unpleasantness was not yet over. By May both Courts had taken up residence facing each other, the French at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, the Spanish at Saint Sebastian. Annoyances increased. Whereas the French were brilliantly costumed for the occasion with ribbons, laces, jewels, rich embroideries and plumes, the Spaniards affected the most severe habits. Dressed all in black, there seemed an affectation of mourning, as if they thought the marriage of the Infanta a national disaster. At least so it struck the French.

The Spaniards ridiculed the French and their rather ostentatious display. When Don Luis de Haro saw the magnificent carriages and dress of the gentlemen who were accompanying Mazarin, he could not resist whispering in the latter's ear: "They will ruin themselves!"

"They will ruin the merchants," was the rather pitiful reply of the Cardinal.

The haughty Spanish nobles refused to mix with the Dukes and peers across the water. Not a single Frenchman was invited to the marriage by proxy, which took place at Fontarabie and not at San Sebastian, as some histories have it. Mademoiselle had to attend incognita. Whether or not others should be allowed to do the same became a state affair.

For three or four hours the Council discussed the question in the Cardinal's apartment. Monsieur, as curious as

a woman, was dying to accompany his cousin. He was formally forbidden to do so because no member of the Spanish Court had deigned to visit the French Court.

They reserved no place in the church at Fontarabie for the French representatives. Even the Bishop of Fréjus, who was to read the warrant of proxy, was unprovided for. He was not even informed of the hour the mass was to be said, and the Abbé Lenet, a brother of Condé's representative in Spain, had to go for him after the ceremony had begun. He entered the church without ushers or attendants of any sort, disturbing everyone on the way to his post. In short, throughout the whole episode, the Spanish treated the French as if they were poor relations.

Louis XIV and his mother were paid no more respect than their subjects. Anne of Austria was overjoyed at this opportunity to see her brother once more after such a long separation. With light heart she advanced eagerly toward the haughty Philip IV, who met his sister's enthusiasm with great coldness. He appeared to see no one around him. "The King of Spain," says an eye witness, "bent slightly over his sister's head. He did not kiss her at all, or even make a pretence of doing so. It was not because of his own haughtiness or any lack of affection for her. On the contrary, there were tears in the eyes of both, so happy were they to see each other. *His action was made necessary by the traditionial Spanish conception of the solemnity appropriate to such an occasion.*" Such explanations had no weight with the French; their reactions are quite well summed up in Madame de Motteville's statement that "the King's cold and *disdainful* air seemed uncalled for."

Another incident offended the French. In the Con-

ference Chamber the line of the frontier was marked upon the floor. Philip IV remained severely on his side of the line, and said in so many words that he would not leave his own kingdom; he even refused to take a single step forward in order to meet the King of France.

The exchange of gifts gave rise to similar vexations. Louis XIV had gone to great expense over his present for the Infanta, a superb coffer, the contents of which are complacently described by Mademoiselle: "It was a rather large chest, lined in gold, containing every imaginable kind of gold and of diamond ornament. There were watches, clocks with chimes, gloves, mirrors, boxes for patches and for lozenges, all sorts of tiny flasks, cases for scissors, knives and tooth picks; there were miniature paintings to be hung above a bed, crosses, rosaries, rings, bracelets, brooches studded with precious stones, one of them extremely valuable. A smaller coffer contained pearls, diamond earrings, and a compartment for the crown jewels. . . . Certainly no one ever received a more magnificent or gallant present." "The precious stones in it," according to the Abbé Montreuil, "were worth 350,000 livres. The Duke de Créquy presented it. The Infanta gave it to her maid of honor without looking at it and put the keys in her pocket." Nothing could have been more rude.

The Queen Mother, for her part, had presented her brother, Philip IV, with "a clock with chimes set with diamonds." He, in turn, sent her several pairs of Spanish gloves. Even the Queen thought it a rather shabby gift.

Such an exhibition, added to the long series of annoyances that had preceded, and to the attacks, both open

and veiled, did not leave Louis XIV with any very warm feeling for his father-in-law or for the Spanish. He was eager to have done with this arrogant but feeble nation. He and his subjects had been insulted long enough. But had the only difference between the two nations been this question of pride, the King was wise and self-controlled enough to have held his peace. As a matter of fact, more vital interests were at stake.

It may be well here to note several facts that are usually passed over in silence when the wars of Louis XIV are discussed. When he decided upon the campaign in Flanders, Spain was becoming more and more embroiled in the German policies. The Regent was an Austrian. The Jesuit Nithard, her Prime Minister and favorite, was also an Austrian and worked hand in glove with the Emperor. Charles II, the scrofulous and degenerate heir to the throne, was five years old. He was expected to die at any moment. If that happened, a serious question would arise as to who would fall heir to this vast realm upon which the sun never set. If the Queen of France were not to claim her rights as daughter of His Catholic Majesty—and daughter by his first wife—the entire inheritance would go to the Emperor, as he too was both the son and the husband of an Infanta of Spain. In that case he would obtain the Netherlands, Franche-Comté, Northern Italy, Sicily, the West Indies, and half of the continent of America. France would never tolerate such an addition to the German Empire. The obvious solution was a friendly partitioning of the inheritance between the two heirs, and no time was lost in considering this arrangement.

But it was to be anticipated that they would either fail

to come to an agreement, or else that one or the other of them would be dissatisfied with his share. Wars, probably prolonged wars, would result. To be ready for such an eventuality, it was obviously the duty of the King of France to strengthen the vulnerable points in his frontiers and to take whatever steps were necessary to prepare himself for the inevitable struggle. Thus he would be in a better position to negotiate.

France was least protected on the Flanders border. It was in precisely this district that, owing to local negotiations, Marie Thérèse of Austria, Louis XIV's wife, could claim sovereignty over "the Duchy of Brabant and its dependencies, the Signory of Malines, Antwerp, Haute-Gueldre, Namur, Limbourg, the fortresses beyond the Meuse, Hainault, Artois, Cambrai, the county of Burgundy, the Duchy of Luxembourg and most of the county of Flanders." She had renounced her rights to inherit her father's estate in return for the dowry she was to have received. But as the dowry had never been paid, there could be no legal opposition to her husband's claims.

With such a pretext was the campaign undertaken. Far from posing as a brutal invader and conqueror trampling legitimate rights under foot, Louis XIV was careful to proclaim the justice of his cause. He refrained from declaring war on Spain. Ostensibly he was merely taking possession of his own property. In reality he was carrying out the great projects of his ancestors, and securing the safety of France by providing her with more easily defensible borders.

THUS at first the King gave the impression that he was merely recovering certain towns and territory that were

his wife's rightful inheritance. But everyone believed that the Spanish throne would soon be vacant, and both France and her sovereign had great hopes for the future. It did not take the King long to awaken from his imperial dreams. Often had the facts of life taught him harsh and sometimes bloody lessons. But for a moment he suffered under the dazzling and youthful illusion that he might be heir to the Empire of Charles V and of Charlemagne—he might even dream of a world Empire. Soon the sceptre would fall into his hands. Then who could resist him? Backed by the gold of the two Americas, what would not be possible!

At about this period he gave an elaborate entertainment which, in a way, typifies the burst of confidence in the destiny of France that had swept over the country. The pretext for the Carrousel of 1662 was the celebration of the birth of the Dauphin. The importance Louis XIV himself attached to it is witnessed by the amount of space devoted to it in his "Mémoires." With all the facts at their disposal modern historians find it easy to exaggerate the whole thing and make it appear ridiculous. For example, it has been looked upon merely as a joke that Louvois played on Colbert, a means of embarrassing the latter who was hard put to it to scrape up enough money for such a costly entertainment. As a matter of fact, it was the solemn and formal expression of the greatest political ambitions France has ever had.

We shall touch upon only the significant details of this magnificent and extravagant display. The most striking fact was that the King appeared in the costume of a Roman Emperor, accompanied by the conventional lictors. Upon the draperies on his horses were embroidered the Ro-

man eagles. For the moment he resembled the future Napoleon. Midst a display of precious stones and costly materials he appeared before the nation, in full divinity.

"The King," according to the official document describing the splendors of the carrousel, "was clad in a Roman tunic of silver brocade, embroidered with gold and studded with large diamonds. Around his neck was a ruffle of the same material, decorated with forty-four clusters of diamonds; the epaulets were also of the same material and were decorated with a hundred and twenty clusters of large diamonds. On his head was a silver helmet inlaid with gold in which were set two large diamonds, a dozen clusters of diamonds on each side and a band of diamond clusters forming a border around it. Above this helmet was a crest of scarlet plumes. . . . His boots were of silver brocade embroidered with gold. . . . His scabbard was studded with so many diamonds that it was difficult to make out the gold in which they were set. . . . He was mounted on a golden bay horse, bespangled with diamonds and with a crest of plumes on its head."

The five sections of the world, each represented by an important personage at Court, paid him homage; after the Roman Emperor, came the sovereigns of Persia, Turkey, India, and the Americas. According to the official description, every section of the world was represented around the cradle of the Dauphin, "as a symbol that all nations did homage to him and recognized in him their future ruler." Already, through his mother's inheritance, he was looked upon as heir to the Indies.

One last, significant detail—on the pediment of the central tribune, which hid the façade of the Tuileries, the following inscription stood out in letters of gold against

the black marble background: "*Victricibus armis Lodoïci, Francorum Imperatoris.*" Louis XIV was hailed as Emperor of the Franks. The Eagle and the Lion were to be laid low. Upon the ruins of Austria and Spain the Empire of Charlemagne would rise once more!

But this dangerous delusion was soon dispelled by the King's innate good sense.

CHAPTER II

"CLAUSA GERMANIS GALLIA"

AFTER an extensive appeal to public opinion through pamphlets setting forth the rights of his case, and the legal arguments supporting it, as well as through lampoons and caricatures, and after protesting his peaceful intentions in all the Courts of Europe, in May 1667 the King finally declared war against Spain —at least in substance his actions amounted to that, though he refrained from a direct attack upon the neighboring kingdom, and claimed that he was merely occupying territory that was rightfully his. This war lasted nearly forty years, occasionally briefly interrupted by treaties that were little more than armistices to allow the contestants to catch their breath.

If the preceding Thirty Years' War ending with the Treaty of the Pyrenees be included, we have practically a second Hundred Years War, culminating in the unity of modern France. It is to this greatest national war in its history that France owes its present standing among the nations of the world. Louis XIV's wars were the second and most strenuous phase of this process of evolution. The young sovereign put everything at his command into this gigantic task. He was more completely bound up in

it than anyone else in the country. The nation, encouraged, and sometimes forced and bullied by him (for it should not be forgotten that France was created despite the French), made its supreme effort. This was undoubtedly the greatest strain, the greatest test of its might and its endurance that it ever underwent before the Napoleonic wars and the Great War of 1914; even so it did less than the King. It was due to his firm, persistent, unyielding will that France triumphed over all the coalitions arrayed against her and became the great State of modern Europe that she still is.

Since the days of Voltaire (and he, of course, greatly admired Louis XIV), it has been fashionable to refer to him as merely the man who organized the intellectual life of France, who built Versailles and Marly and gave the magnificent entertainments. His achievements in war are slighted, if they are not actually disparaged. As a matter of fact, his wars were his most important contribution to France; they were the very soul of his reign.

The conventionally accepted history of this period as embodied in the writings of Michelet and his successors is an amazing phenomenon. Not only have French historians failed utterly to understand the period, but in their conclusions they have shown the most revolting bias—and bias against their own country. Michelet is especially exasperating. Such unfairness and blindness is shocking. One cannot help thinking, "Why, this historical genius is either a simpleton or entirely out of his head." One puts the book down to avoid further disrespect and laments the anti-monarchistic furor that led this great Frenchman so far astray. Penetrating as he usually is in treating of this period he has failed completely to understand the guiding

LOUIS XIV AT THE CAPTURE OF LUXEMBOURG

spirit of his native land. His hatred for the King has driven him into the camp of the enemies of France. He betrays the French cause to gratify his political passions.

Others, without denying the benefits that were derived from his wars, find fault with him for not conducting them more vigorously and for failing to draw greater profit from them. "What!" they say, "such a long and exhausting struggle merely to put a little country like Holland in its place? . . . all that effort merely to seize the Netherlands which was ours for the taking?" They forget that in each of his wars Louis XIV was alone against all Europe; that Holland was supported by England, Spain, the Empire, the Scandinavian countries. For forty years there was a concentrated effort by all Europe to humble France, to crush the Lily, *conculcare Lilia,* as contemporary pamphleteers put it. Frenchmen gradually became more and more proud at the thought that they belonged to a nation capable of such resistance. The King's motto, "Alone against all," was widely displayed on plaques hung over the chimney-pieces in houses throughout France—even in the recently annexed villages in Lorraine.

The King was even more disturbed by the bad faith of his enemies than by the fact that he must stand alone against them. Their word was never to be depended upon. They would obstinately refuse to carry out the terms of the treaties. The intervals of peace were really periods of clandestine war. It was necessary to keep large standing armies to force the defeated nations to carry out their agreements or to prevent their preparing an unexpected attack.

To his other difficulties must be added the fact that

the King had insufficient means for carrying on the struggle. However great his own genius and that of his ministers, and despite his great ability as an organizer and the admirable manner in which he nursed the resources of France, the fact remained that he had neither enough men nor money to withstand the combined forces of Europe. The financial system under the monarchy was abominable, as were the recruiting methods. Louis XIV did not think it necessary to correct these errors of his predecessors. This was a mistake on his part, but a good deal of the blame must also fall upon France, for no one was willing to support him. When it came to celebrations and triumphal arches, his subjects were wildly enthusiastic and proclaimed themselves the greatest nation on earth. But —it must be repeated—they begrudged a single franc or a single man in bringing it about.

Thus these wars were endlessly prolonged because funds, which are the sinews of all wars, were lacking. The length of the wars, and the enormous material and resources demanded by them, taxed the energies of the country to the limit. If, with a leader as great as Louis XIV, supported by able assistants in all fields, the results did not come fully up to the hopes of the nation, it was because it was humanly impossible to do more.

Except for a brief moment at the beginning of his reign when he lost his head as any young man worshipped by a whole nation might do, Louis XIV was clearly conscious of the difficulties to be faced in accomplishing this necessary and inevitable task. From the moment he first gave serious attention to foreign affairs, his policy may be summed up in the two words, "prudence," and "modera-

tion." His course was diametrically opposed to those followed during the Revolution and the Napoleonic regime.

His conduct is truly astonishing and admirable. At twenty-nine, his dreams of glory encouraged by all classes in the kingdom, he had behind him a large, well-trained army, money, provisions, and ammunition. He had the best reasons in the world for disliking the Spanish, who for more than a century had been the traditional enemies of France; they had insulted him repeatedly; their diplomacy had been notoriously underhanded; they had never carried out the terms of their treaties nor admitted themselves defeated; they had constantly attempted to stir up Europe against him. He knew the weakness and pretentiousness of the Emperor, and realized how mercenary the German Princes were, and, for that matter, the Scandinavian rulers. He realized all this. He had the most powerful incentives for exhibiting his strength and every excuse for doing so. Yet he mastered his personal resentment and restrained his ambition. He announced to the world that he had no intention of declaring war on anyone. He confined himself to the defence of his rights and thus screened his plans. When he decided to invade Flanders, after making known his claims in Madrid, he did it with an air of chivalry. He was fighting in order to lay her rightful inheritance at the feet of his wife.

When Lille and Douai had opened their gates to his army, the Queen came almost immediately to visit her faithful subjects with the air of a sovereign returning to her own country and, by her presence, tried to obliterate the memory of the recent visit by the armies of her formidable husband.

Thus he maintained the validity of his wife's claim upon

the Spanish throne. No one can understand Louis XIV's foreign policies without taking this into account. Long ago Mignet pointed out that the Spanish Succession was the crux of his reign. Historians seem to have overlooked its importance. They look upon it as a matter of personal vanity and ambition on the part of the King. In point of fact, it was a question of life or death for France. Had Germany come into the Spanish Succession—which included not merely Spain and the New World, but also various portions of Italy, Burgundy, and the Netherlands —we should have been crushed between this giant Germany, irresistible on land, and England, mistress of the seas. It was the duty of the man who had inherited the guardianship of France to prevent this catastrophe at any cost.

This complicated problem required as much tact as vigor or perseverance. The caution and far-sightedness with which he attacked it deserve the highest praise. Long in advance, he admits, he had "thought the whole thing out." First of all he established the fact that he was the direct and legitimate heir to the Spanish throne. So thoroughly was that done that Charles II, bitter enemy of France though he was, admitted it in his will. But both Spaniards and the Emperor protested the validity of his claim, on the pretext that both Louis XIV's mother and his wife had formally renounced their rights to the succession in their marriage contracts. The King of France answered this with the statement that the renunciation was dependent upon the payment of their dowries and that these had never been paid. Both he and his subjects were convinced that the most weighty reason for their action was that the very existence of France was

threatened, but they could not voice that sentiment.

Even so, he realized that Europe would be much more alarmed to see a powerful and united France come into the Spanish Succession than a weak and disrupted Germany. He must proceed with great care and prudence if he were to make Europe admit the validity of His Most Christian Majesty's claim. When it was unavoidable, he must use force, at other times he must rely on subtlety or bribery.

These facts explain every aspect of the King's conduct. Once the main objective had been achieved, he stopped. He knew the great cost of even a small war. His only interest was in getting Europe to admit the validity of his claim to the Spanish throne. To achieve that he must avoid arousing public opinion against him. His neighbors must be impressed with his power, but not frightened lest he abuse it. He foresaw that in the end they would all be against him and that a long war was inevitable. Despite his power, the efficiency of his organization, the superiority of his subjects and his own genius, he realized that he might be overcome by sheer force of numbers. For this reason it was wise to husband his army.

In the light of this, it is not surprising that he halted the triumphal conquest of his army in Flanders. When, after the capture of Courtray, he returned abruptly to Compiègne, and after the surrender of Lille hurried back to Saint Germain, some historians have interpreted his action as being an indication of his impatience to rejoin Madame de Montespan. Such a theory is sheer nonsense. He had many important reasons for retiring, foremost among which was the diplomatic struggle which was bound to follow the end of the fighting. He must win

the good graces of the Holy Father, whom the Spaniards had already chosen as arbitrator, and, even more important, he must forestall action on the part of the Dutch, who were perturbed by the terrifying march of the army through Flanders. "The Dutch," wrote the King, "may not have realized that I knew all about their intrigues against me." Because he knew their policy, because he knew that an alliance was imminent between Holland, Sweden, and England, he had been eager to occupy this new territory. It would be most useful in the bargaining that would precede the new treaty. For reasons to be stated presently he preferred to rely upon negotiations rather than to follow up the advantages already gained in the field. He had seized Franche-Comté because he had foreseen that he would have to restore some of the conquered territory. It was, therefore, advisable to take as much as possible.

He had not long to wait for the answer of the new coalition to his conquest of Franche-Comté. He was called upon to accept the Spanish offer.

Thus at the very moment he presented his claims—and let us not forget that these claims were indispensable if France was to have a real frontier—the King found himself opposed by a coalition of all Europe.

What was he to do? For the moment he was undoubtedly more powerful than his enemies united. Yet he appeared to yield to them and consented to make peace. A large section of French public opinion was opposed to such a compromise; his action was severely condemned. Let us hear the King's reasons. Like a hero in a tragedy of Corneille, he communes with himself: "It was an extremely difficult decision to arrive at; there were weighty argu-

ments that might be advanced on either side. My personal perplexity was increased by the fact that I was forced to make up my mind unaided, as there was no one with whom I could consult freely. . . . On the one hand it was pointed out that all the arrangements for the campaign had already been made, recruits levied or at least arranged for, supplies assembled and a good share of the necessary expense already incurred. . . . But though these reasons were plausible and might have influenced a man prompted by personal ambition, I saw with some regret that the reasons on the other side were sounder. Those who favored peace did not question my being stronger than Spain. They pointed out that defensive warfare required less strength, that the more I progressed, the weaker I would become by reason of the large garrisons that would have to be left in the recently conquered sections, while on the other hand the enemy would grow stronger day by day; that although I might succeed in subduing a considerable area, in the end I would either have to agree to a peace giving back to the enemy most of the territory I had gained, *or else, alone, I would have to carry on an interminable war against my neighbors.*

"In addition to such reasons, which might have been advanced by almost anyone, there were others that were based upon plans I was then maturing in secret. [His plans concerning the Spanish Succession.] . . . In view of such a chance of enlarging my possessions, it seemed highly advisable to build up *a reputation for integrity and moderation* with my smaller neighbors. . . . I saw no way of exhibiting those virtues more patently than by taking this opportunity to demonstrate that, fully prepared for war as I was, I was willing to listen to their entreaties

and to be satisfied with a relatively small gain. I might add that I accomplished more than was at first apparent, for as the territory granted me was ceded in a treaty willingly signed, *it amounted practically to an admission of the invalidity of their claim that the Queen had renounced her rights to the inheritances of her House.*"

Thus in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle which ended this first war, all other considerations were subordinated to the Spanish Succession—the most important question that was to arise during his reign. Louis XIV restrained himself with an eye to the future. He returned Franche-Comté for the time being. But his gains were not as slight as he would have them thought. He had strengthened the frontier on the north by the annexation of part of Flanders and Hainault. He referred to the latter as territory "that has always belonged to the Kings of France and is part of their domain." Moreover, the towns of Tournay, Oudenarde and Charleroy, occupied by our troops, although situated in enemy country, were tempting morsels for future conquests.

It must be admitted that war and foreign affairs were much less complicated in those days than they are today. Everyone knew who the principal actors were. The battle fields were severely limited. It was a game of chess with its Kings, Queens, Bishops, Knights, Castles, and Pawns. There was no great difficulty in following the fortunes of the players. But it must be admitted that his first attempt showed Louis XIV to be an excellent player.

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle settled nothing. On the contrary, it showed that a new conflict was inevitable.

Let us examine the situation from the point of view of

a Frenchman, omitting political metaphysics. France could not abide by the existing frontiers. Toward Germany, there was the breach made by Franche-Comté, which had just been returned to Spain; Alsace was only partially subdued; Lorraine had been returned to the Duke; the Palatinate was still hostile. As for the Spanish, France was endangered by the poorly defended Oise valley and by the fact that only a part of Flanders had been conquered. Neither Cambrai, Valenciennes, nor Maubeuge belonged to us. Our enemies were not merely plotting to keep us from further conquests, but to recover what they had recently lost. At the time, however, it happened that we were the stronger, the better prepared. It was obviously to our interest to strike at once and to thwart their schemes.

Thus the King sized up the situation. Historians who look upon the campaign of 1672 and the subsequent wars as Louis XIV's means of securing personal revenge upon the Dutch, who had annoyed him, or as a despicable plot of Louvois to make his services indispensable—such historians are making game of France and their readers.

With an acute realization of the necessities of the situation, Louis XIV began in 1669 by making sure of Lorraine. Duke Charles IV had persistently refused to carry out his agreements and was constantly plotting with Germany. To the north, the Triple Alliance—Holland, England, and Sweden—had not been dissolved. DeWitt was even attempting to strengthen it, and was endeavoring by all means at his command to drive France from the Netherlands. The King first of all attempted to paralyze his efforts by a very skilful diplomatic campaign conducted by Lionne. His greatest success was in getting England to

drop out of the alliance. At this, he felt free to invade Holland, the most determined opponent of his projects in Flanders.

At once the European coalition that he had hoped to avoid was organized against him. The struggle was prolonged for six years and, although French victories were numerous, and Louis XIV kept his enemies at a respectful distance, he was forced to call another halt and to negotiate the treaty of Nimwegen. This time the King gained enough to console him for the postponement of his great projects. At last he obtained Franche-Comté, and Fribourg, on the right bank of the Rhine; Lorraine remained in his hands as a pledge of good faith. In Flanders he had a defensible frontier—more or less the present one.

For a moment after Nimwegen the King suffered from the illusion that his task was accomplished, or at least that the military phase of it was over. Henceforth he intended to apply himself to consolidating his conquests; he felt that in the future he would be able to live in peace with all his neighbors, especially with Spain. Immediately following the peace, His Catholic Majesty had asked the hand of the King's niece. Deformed as he was, the Spanish ruler might have an heir. This did away with, or at least postponed, the question of the Spanish Succession. Lastly, thanks to the new Queen of Spain, the influence of France might replace that of Austria at Madrid. To give striking proof of his peaceful intentions, the King of France began to demobilize; he reduced his army by half. Even at the Conference of Nimwegen, he had unexpectedly reduced his claims and had given the greatest proof

of his good will by returning many of his precious conquests.

Louis XIV was dominated by his determination to preserve his gains rather than to add to them. By his own admission, he wished to avoid the failing so often attributed to the French, namely of inability to preserve the fruits of their victories. He hoped, therefore, to be able to enjoy in peace the advantages so recently obtained and so dearly bought. But his illusions were soon destroyed by the patent intrigues of his enemies.

At the very moment of the marriage of his niece to His Catholic Majesty, the Spanish became increasingly annoying to the Marquis de Villars, his ambassador in Madrid. In Biscay and Flanders there were daily irritating incidents on the borders. French barges were burned, merchantmen captured, messengers arrested. Lastly, and much more important, immediately after the signing of the treaty, the Spaniards sought to negotiate an alliance with Holland and England that would enable them to avoid fulfilling their obligations to France. According to the terms of the agreement, the Spaniards had promised to turn either Dinant or Charlemont over to His Most Christian Majesty within a year after the ratification of the treaty.

At the end of the year they demanded a further extension of time. Their intention, as the Marquis de Villars penetratingly remarked, "was not to facilitate their evacuation of Dinant, but to enable them to put through an offensive and defensive alliance with England and Holland. This accomplished, they felt that they could safely refuse to cede Charlemont to France, as the latter would doubtless be afraid of becoming embroiled with such a

powerful league. If worse came to worst, they could force Germany to join them and would then have all Europe in arms to safeguard their interests, at the trifling cost of having a war break out in Flanders, and making their allies many promises that they would never carry out."

Why, one wonders in passing, do historians refer so constantly to Louis XIV's trickery, and never that of his enemies? Since the days of Olivares—that brutal minister, who remarked: *No hay gratitud entre reyes* (kings know no gratitude)—the duplicity of Spanish diplomacy had been the scandal of Europe. Their treachery in their dealings with France had become traditional.

Louis XIV, on the other hand, began his "Mémoires" with the following rule: "There is no question but that, to be a good and a great Prince, one must first be an honorable man." Further on he adds: "This, my son, is one of the most delicate considerations in the conduct of Princes. I am far from desiring to counsel you to be dishonest, but one must make certain distinctions in this matter. The relations between the French and Spanish crowns are, and have long been, such that it is impossible for the one to rise without lowering the other. . . . That has given birth to an unavoidable jealousy and enmity between them which may be buried temporarily by treaties, but which is never removed . . . Both nations look upon treaties in the same light. No matter what the general clauses promising friendship and coöperation between them . . . each realizes full well that what is meant is that they will refrain from *obvious* hostilities, for as far as infractions of the spirit of the agreement is concerned each expects such things of the other."

After the signing of the Treaty of Nimwegen Louis

XIV had more reason than ever to beware of the Spanish. In the Dinant-Charlemont affair they had disregarded a solemn promise; they had also attempted to form a coalition against France. In such circumstances, the King concluded, "I would have failed in my duty to the State had I observed the terms of the treaty any more scrupulously than they themselves did."

GERMANY was no more to be relied on than Spain. The Emperor Leopold had only signed the peace treaty because he had no alternative. The Hungarians had rebelled, and the Turks were threatening his capital. It was evident that, once these enemies were disposed of, he would immediately turn his attention to France again and try to recover the territory he had been forced to cede. Even while his plenipotentiaries were in the midst of the negotiations at Nimwegen, early in 1679, an imperial army occupied Strasbourg. How could such a move be anything but threatening?

It was at this period that Louvois and Louis XIV conceived two plans to safeguard the French borders. Vauban was entrusted with the task of fortifying the cities and districts that were at that moment in our possession. The second scheme was to convoke feudal courts at Metz, Brisach, and Besançon to determine what fiefs belonged to the territories annexed since the Treaty of Westphalia. Such fiefs would then be claimed by France.

Vauban carried out his task in masterly fashion. He changed the physical aspect of many towns and left great monuments to his genius throughout the country. Even today some of his citadels and walls still stand, but they are being allowed to fall into ruin. Some of the most beau-

tiful of them should be preserved to bear their eloquent witness to the greatness of France. The citadels at Lille and Montlouis are striking manifestations of the genius of the builders and engineers of those days; their work was done for the glory of France and of the King. They are not ostentatious; there is nothing superfluous about them; but they are truly regal in their solidity. They were built with constant attention to art and beauty, and with amazing ingenuity. With chapels, entertainment halls, residences of the governors, and hospitals, they are, in truth, miniature towns.

At Lille, over the monumental West Gate, one sees a bas relief of sculptured lyres and flutes surrounding several opened books which are enclosed in a border of helmets and breast plates. The main gate, as majestic as a triumphal arch, boasts the arms of France surrounded by shields and the Roman fasces.

In his excellent little work, written more than half a century ago, "Les Frontières de la France," Théophile Lavallée remarks: "Everything was planned and arranged with the most consummate skill; great attention was paid to the peculiar necessities of each site. *It was all done with the most enlightened, the most practical kind of patriotism.* The work was performed quietly and modestly as if it were some ordinary and unimportant public work. Never did more than a few people know what was happening; it all came under the modest head of *Règlement des places de la frontière.* But the work still exists in mute testimony of its magnitude. For a century the safety of France depended upon it. It is a monument to the eternal glory of the three men who brought it to pass—Louis XIV, Vauban and Louvois."

The other step that was taken to protect our frontiers —the convocation of the feudal courts—was also, at least at first, carried out quietly "like an ordinary and unimportant public work."

In 1679, after the Treaty of Nimwegen, the situation was roughly as follows: We had again acquired Franche-Comté, but on the German border there was a gap formed by Montbéliard. We still had Alsace, ceded thirty years before by the Treaty of Munster, but ten imperial cities, among them Strasbourg, did not recognize the authority of the King of France and claimed to be in direct fief to the Emperor, to whose troops they opened their gates. Such a condition could not be tolerated for a moment. The fact must be strongly emphasized, for orthodox historians do not mention it. Even after the Treaty of Munster, the main task of conquering Alsace still lay before Louis XIV. He had to shut out the Imperial armies, and to counteract German plots. Lorraine, on the other hand, was still under its own Duke. It was to little avail that we had occupied it, for our defences there were slight. Our only fortified outpost was Longwy. On the Flemish border, Maubeuge and Cambray were rather flimsy defences for the Oise Valley; we still needed Charleroy, Dinant, and Namur. In short, everywhere the enemy could find good points for attack.

On the other hand, we could acquire the territory necessary for our protection without drawing a sword, merely by falling back upon our feudal rights. These rights were implicit in the existing treaties. Louis XIV would have been stupid not to make use of this opportunity, especially as his adversaries had relied upon analogous claims to maintain their foothold in the midst of our recent con-

quests. It was by virtue of just such feudal laws that the Emperor claimed Strasbourg and the other Alsatian towns. The King of Spain was doing the same thing when, even after Nimwegen, he claimed the title of Duke of Burgundy. After the Treaty of the Pyrenees, we were forced to relinquish Llivia to the Spanish, although it was in the very midst of Cerdagne, because Don Luis de Haro had put forward an old claim to suzerainty.

Knowing perfectly well that his enemies were preparing for a new war in order to annul the recent treaties, the King would have erred greatly had he allowed them to remain in positions of the greatest strategic importance, when he could with perfect legality occupy them himself. Since all of Europe was combining to prevent France from obtaining a natural frontier, both cunning and brute force had to be brought into play. Thanks to the King's foresight, France was not caught unprepared when the struggle was once more resumed. He had strengthened and fortified the border to such an extent that for ten years France was able to withstand a host of enemies and could carry on campaigns in Flanders, Germany, Italy, Catalonia, and along the entire Atlantic and Mediterranean seaboard. When at last the enemy, as exhausted as we, sought peace once more, the only complaint that could be made against Louis XIV was that he did not fully exploit his victory, that his demands were too moderate, that he should not have returned such places as the bridge heads on the Rhine, Luxembourg and Mont Royal, which would have permitted us to control the entire Palatinate. Vauban, the hero of this war, was indignant at such leniency. After the signing of the treaty he wrote: "I think the terms of this treaty even more scandalous than

the treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis in the reign of Henri II, which has always been looked upon as the most disgraceful treaty ever signed."

We must not, however, forget that in 1697, when the Treaty of Ryswick was negotiated, the death of the King of Spain seemed imminent, and the whole question of the Spanish Succession was coming to the fore. Louis XIV counted on receiving at least part of this inheritance, and therefore wished to have public opinion in Europe favorable to him. Consequently, he gave this proof of his magnanimity. Although he was prepared to face a new war, he wished to avoid it if possible.

There is one last factor to be mentioned. Although to the end he struggled masterfully to escape it, Louis XIV was at this time more than ever under the influence of that ill-starred woman, Madame de Maintenon, and the bigoted religious party centred around the Duke of Burgundy. To dissuade him from completing the great task which he had set himself, they called to his mind the exhausted state of France and begged him to hearken to "the groans of his subjects." This man, so relentless toward himself, was much more sensitive and even sentimental than is generally thought. Try as he did to control it, his typically French delicacy led him into several political errors.

When, on November 10, 1770, Louis XIV formally approved the will of His Catholic Majesty, appointing his grand-nephew, the young Duke of Anjou, heir to the Spanish throne, he was following the dictates of his own dignity and the best interests of the State. Had he refused, the Archduke Charles, second son of the Emperor,

would have become King of Spain. At all costs, he must refuse to permit a German to occupy the throne at Madrid. It would have meant that once more, as in the days of Charles V and Francis I, France would have been completely hemmed in.

Despite his hatred for all that was French, Charles II, the last of the Spanish Hapsburgs, had recognized that the Duke of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV, alone would be able to preserve the integrity of Spain. Against his will, the King of Spain was forced to pay homage to the prestige and the power of His Most Christian Majesty. Thus, it was said, the eighteenth century began with "an unheard of wave of prosperity for the House of Bourbon."

Yet Louis XIV did not allow himself to be swept away by his success. This autocrat who had just achieved the ambition of his life, the one thing he had steadfastly worked for, retained his poise and balance at the hour of triumph. In word as in act he maintained perfect dignity and moderation. The account of the presentation of the young Duke of Anjou to the foreign ambassadors at Versailles is well known. "Gentlemen," said Louis XIV, "you see the King of Spain. Both by birth and by the will of the late King, he was destined for that crown. The entire nation wishes it and has earnestly begged me to approve it. It is the will of Heaven. It is with pleasure that I add my sanction." Turning to his grandson, he said: "Be a good Spaniard; henceforth, that is your first duty. But remember, you were born a Frenchman that you might preserve the union between the two nations. In doing that, you will render both countries happy and preserve the peace of Europe." What noble and inspiring words! That phrase, "Gentlemen, you see

the King of Spain," was a stroke of genius. Imagine what a modern ruler, such, for instance, as William II would have said! No one could have faced such a glorious moment more simply and more grandly.

Yet war was inevitable. The King had foreseen the dire results that would follow upon his acceptance. It has been claimed that had he used greater skill and subtlety he might have avoided the conflict. That is either nonsense or calumny. When first the text of Charles II's testament became known, the Emperor was furious at being deprived of his inheritance and protested vigorously. As far as possible, in the weakened state in which he was, he prepared for a struggle. As for England and Holland, the maritime powers, they were much annoyed at the thought that the trade with the Spanish Indies and in the Mediterranean was to pass into the hands of the French. William of Orange, who disliked Louis XIV personally, was in favor of war and only pretended to accept Charles II's testament in order to gain more time to prepare for it.

Louis is censured for having registered with the Parlement of Paris letters patent retaining the Duke of Anjou's rights to the French crown. This made it look as if there were a possibility of uniting France and Spain under a single Bourbon prince. But that was merely a precaution taken in the extremely unlikely event that the direct line of Louis XIV would die out. It should be added that the Archduke, who also claimed the throne, had not made any renunciation of this kind. If he became King of Spain, he might also become emperor of Germany. At a moment when the Emperor was preparing to make war on him, had Louis XIV any right to be more magnanimous than his adversary? Our historians seem to have a theory

that the King of France was bound to give in and to humiliate himself, whereas his enemies were not required to heed any of his claims.

They complain because Louis XIV expelled the Dutch garrisons from the so-called "border posts," where, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Ryswick, they had been allowed to fortify the frontier against us. But was the new Spanish King, a son of France, to tolerate the presence of his worst enemies in his Flemish towns? And was the French King, who foresaw the coming war, to allow these same enemies the incalculable advantage of installing themselves in the heart of the country that he would soon be forced to protect, in the name of his grandson? And even worse, was he to allow them once more to threaten the French border?

Louis XIV's real mistake—once more due to his impetuous generosity—was in freeing the garrisons of these towns instead of holding them prisoners until the Dutch had made their position more clear. Saint Simon, who had no love for the King, emphasizes vehemently this fault and terms it "*ingenuous simplicity.*" "He gave them back," according to this author, "twenty-two perfectly good battalions that they would otherwise have missed sorely. They would have been unable to take part in the war, and consequently he would have seriously disconcerted England, the Empire and the whole alliance that was being formed against the two kingdoms."

Another illogical complaint made against the King is the frequently lamented fact that he recognized James Stuart as King of England instead of William of Orange, who was proclaimed King by the English Parliament, and that he thus antagonized the Protestants. But the King

of France's actions were sure to antagonize the Protestants anyway. And, having to choose between the two pretenders, it would certainly have been imprudent to decide in favor of his avowed personal enemy, a man who had violated all existing treaties by forming a coalition against France.

If that was a mistake, at least it was not a very serious one; he was guilty of worse. His most serious error was in listening to the defeatist party, headed by Madame de Maintenon, when things started to go against him. He almost lost the war by his decision to cede such places as Lille, Condé, Maubeuge and Strasbourg to the enemy; he was on the verge of disgracing himself by granting the allies subsidies with which to combat the King of Spain, his grandson. Happily, sick and weighed down with sorrow as he was, this old man rallied his powers. Then, indeed, did he become a great national leader. Addressing the nation in terms worthy of him, he persuaded France to make a final sacrifice to defend her native soil. He alone, or almost alone, did not lose heart. He made a superb recovery, culminating in the victory at Denain. That victory was the personal achievement of Louis XIV. It was his masterly idea to counter-attack at Denain; the movement proved decisive. Step by step, hour by hour, he followed the moves of his generals, map in hand; he gave them the wisest counsel, while leaving them complete freedom of initiative. The correspondence relative to this campaign is convincing proof of the way the King's initiative won out over the hesitations of the Marquis de Villars. The latter, in his "Mémoires," describes his conversation with the King just before the battle. Louis XIV had advised him to retreat behind the Somme in case

he was beaten: "I know that river," he said. "It is very difficult to cross. There are some fortifications along that line and I intend to go to Pérrone or Saint Quentin and there collect whatever troops are left. I will then join you and we will make a last attempt; we will either save the country or perish together, for *never will I allow the enemy to approach my capital.*"

What can one add after such words? They in themselves are sufficient praise for the old King. Had he been defeated, assuredly he would have done as he said.

THANKS to this heroic resistance, he was able not only to maintain his pride, but to preserve practically all of the territory won during the previous wars.

By the treaties of Utrecht and Rastadt we kept Franche-Comté, Alsace, with the ten Imperial cities, among them Strasbourg—Strasbourg, annexed only in 1681, which we owe entirely to the perseverance of Louis XIV and his ministers, to the alternate vigor and moderation of their tactics—Strasbourg, bridge head of the Rhine and one of the important keys to France, which has just been regained at such great cost. Lorraine, although left provisionally to the Duke, was virtually ours. To the north, our frontier was even more substantial than it is today. In 1815 we lost the forts defending the Oise and Sarre valleys. They have never been returned to us. Moreover, there was no longer any danger that France might be completely encircled by Spain and the House of Austria. The Hapsburgs had been replaced by the Bourbons. That advantage is to be felt even today. Our border along the Pyrenees became, and still remains, the most peaceful of all.

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF THE QUEEN INTO ARRAS IN 1667

After an engraving by F. Vander Meuten

We lost no maritime or colonial advantages. At Utrecht we had granted England a certain amount of territory and certain commercial privileges, but we were the allies of Spain, the greatest colonial power in the world. Moreover, as may be seen from the instructions that Louis XIV, just before his death, sent the Count du Luc, our ambassador at Vienna, he was preparing a re-arrangement of alliances that would have permitted him to renew the struggle with the English. Henceforth Austria was to be our ally and, with her aid, we would maintain peace on the continent and would be free to turn our attention to the sea.

All in all, Louis XIV left France considerably larger and much better protected than she had ever been before. Doubtless the results he achieved may seem out of proportion to the length and the arduousness of the struggle, but the bitter opposition he met must not be forgotten. From the first all Europe had been against him.

In considering Louis XIV's wars, one should not forget that he was hemmed in on all sides and that he could rely only on his own strength, his luck, or the inattention of his adversaries to make a sudden and ever-risky sally here or there. Under such conditions it was most difficult to achieve any lasting success. But despite all obstacles, he gained the most necessary objective; at last we had a natural frontier. Louis XIV was not lying when, after his first victories, he had a medal struck with the inscription: *Clausa Germanis Gallia.* As far as was possible in that suspicious Europe where every country was against him, he had closed Gaul to the Germans.

Neither was there anything misleading about the symbolic figures at the gates at Versailles. Spain and Ger-

many had been conquered, or, at least, rendered impotent. The enemies of France had not cast down the Lily. The Eagle and the Lion had been rendered harmless for a long time.

CHAPTER III

THE KING'S CONTRIBUTION

IT IS TRUE that the results achieved by Louis XIV's policies have been more lasting than striking, but their effect upon the development of the nation is undeniable. There are those, however, who deny the King all credit for them and claim that his ministers and generals alone were responsible for the success of his projects. Such a theory conforms with the realistic and sordidly democratic theories of nineteenth century historians, who explained the higher forms of being as mere combinations of atoms and looked upon a great man as the sum of a series of hereditary tendencies added to the accident of time and place. In reality, a great man and a great reign are the result of will power, or of the combination of a number of forceful wills, triumphing over fate.

As Louis XIV himself gladly admitted, he was greatly aided by his assistants. Among these collaborators, the one he most admired and praised was the nation itself. In his reminiscences on the war of 1672 he remarked, with justifiable satisfaction: "During the course of this war I flatter myself that I demonstrated what France, unaided, is able to accomplish. The treasury supplied our allies with millions and everywhere money was spent

freely; I found the means of striking terror into the soul of my enemies, of astounding my neighbors and causing my detractors to lose courage. My subjects supported me to the best of their ability—in the army, by their courage, in the country, by their zeal, and in foreign lands, by their industry and skill. *In short, France demonstrated the difference between herself and other nations by what she was able to accomplish.*" That recalls Napoleon's statement to his army: "Soldiers, I am satisfied with you!" But the thought of Louis XIV is richer and more profound. In his thanks, he includes not only all classes, but all branches of national activity. Once again the King expresses his pride at being at the head of such a nation.

He was no less grateful to his ministers and generals. He was constantly thanking them and congratulating them for what they had done "for the good of the service." In the various preparations for war, and even in the conduct of campaigns and the attack or defence of fortified towns, he owed much to the energy and the intelligence of Louvois, an incomparable minister of war, and to Clerville, Vauban and even such subalterns as Chamlay.

Louvois has been pictured as Louis XIV's evil genius. He has often been attacked for his cynical brutality. It may be that, to a certain extent, he had to be cynical and brutal to counterbalance the King's scrupulous integrity, his fear of wounding or of causing suffering, in short, his characteristically French humanity and generosity. It is definitely established that Louvois had great difficulty in persuading the King to permit the devastation of the Palatinate, that act which brought down on France such a furious storm of protest both from Germany and from

the rest of Europe. Quite justly, French historians join in censuring this act. Nothing can excuse such an atrocious deed. One sees plainly in Louvois' letter how it hurt the King to be forced to ratify such orders. We should note in passing, however, that the famous scene described by Saint Simon in which the King, furious at Louvois for having ordered the burning of Trèves upon his own responsibility, seizes a pair of tongs and is about to strike his minister, is almost surely the product of the author's over-excited imagination. Too often, however, has this act been termed an exhibition of deliberate and wanton cruelty. Historians do not mention the fact that it was a question of saving Alsace and Lorraine, and perhaps the kingdom from an invasion like the one in 1674. Neither do they record that the inhabitants of the devastated sections were, as far as possible, indemnified and were invited to settle in Alsace and Franche-Comté where they were promised an exemption from all taxes for a period of ten years. Moreover, they fail to point out that, from a strictly military point of view, Napoleon regarded this devastation of the Palatinate as the greatest single act Louvois ever performed. "Only Wellington and I," he said, "do things like that."

However that may be, this son of Michel Le Tellier was a minister of war after the King's own heart. Between them they organized modern warfare. They looked upon a campaign as a scientific problem, or, at least, as an operation in which the most important consideration was to work out a system whereby a body of troops and supplies could be concentrated upon a given point at a given time. It was a task to be supervised from

a desk. Louis XIV and Louvois were the originators of our modern General Staffs.

Just as in foreign affairs the King followed Mazarin's lessons, so in military tactics he was a pupil of Turenne. The Marshal was a cool and deliberate man; his methods were exactly the opposite of those of such impetuous and fiery leaders as Luxembourg and Condé, who usually relied upon the inspiration of the moment. But the King had too much practical military experience not to realize how priceless such qualities as these might be. He sincerely admired both Luxembourg and Condé. Although he had good reason to mistrust the latter, he never failed to pay him the most flattering respect. After the capture of Maestricht in 1673, he wrote: "Cousin, my confidence in your friendship allowed me to picture your pleasure at the capture of Maestricht even before your letter arrived. But I will confess that, as I read it, I was touched and very pleased to receive such compliments from a man of your calibre. Your words could scarcely have been more acceptable. I thank you for them." Later, at his brother's victory at Cassel, he wrote Condé: "In camp before the fortress at Cambrai, April 15, 1677: Cousin, you are quite right in congratulating me upon the battle of Cassel. Had I won it myself I could not be more pleased either by the size of the engagement, the importance of the juncture, or the honor reflected upon my brother. Nor am I surprised at your pleasure. It is only right that you in turn should yourself experience the happiness that you have given to others by just such successes." It must be admitted that it would have been impossible to distribute the credit with more tact or graciousness.

Besides ministers and generals, the nobility of France deserves credit for having contributed more than any other body to the military successes of the reign.

Even today it is a by-word that, under the last of the Bourbons, the nobles in France were only a collection of "braided flunkies," so many decorative pieces in the King's antechambers. Doubtless, from time to time, everyone with a name, every officer in the army repaired to Versailles for a period of relaxation. Each year the campaigns would stop with the first autumn rains and would not begin again until the spring. The officers would take up their winter quarters at Court and enjoy the hard-earned pleasures and distractions that were offered them. Most of these officers were very brave soldiers and devoted to their profession. It is a serious error to judge them by that old guard of the nobility, pressed into service in a moment of panic, which cut so sorry a figure during the campaign of 1674. Those country squires, snatched from their rustic dovecotes, were a national guard, as it were, a poorly equipped and badly trained territorial army. To find the true military nobility of those days one must go to the King's Household, to his Guards and Musketeers. These bodies of picked men were a model for the rest of the army.

In a general way it might be said that under Louis XIV more than at any time in history the nobility of France was a great nursery furnishing soldiers for the defence of the realm. One of the Venetian ambassadors wrote his government: "The King of France has as many soldiers as he has subjects." That was true of the nobility, especially among the younger sons who were without fortune and could support themselves only by obtaining a benefice

in the church or a commission in the army. War was the only means of livelihood for most of them. When they could not fight for His Most Christian Majesty, they would ask permission to seek employment under the Emperor or the Turkish Sultan. That was obviously a dangerous condition. These turbulent youths, interested only in plundering and otherwise exploiting conquered countries, might cause difficulties for their leaders and for the King. Everyone admitted not merely the necessity of pillage and indemnities, but of finding continual employment for these young men who dreamed only of bruises and wounds. In 1690, on the eve of a great European conflict, the Abbé Thésut, one of Bussy-Rabutin's correspondents, wrote in a perfectly matter of fact way: "*France needs a war to give the young men something to do* and to train them in that calling." When a campaign was announced, the nobles volunteered in such numbers that some of them had to be rejected. On the eve of the campaign of 1667 there was an extraordinary rush of recruits to enlist. "So eager were they to serve me," says the King in his "Mémoires," "that, whenever any action was contemplated, my greatest difficulty was to restrain them; this was especially noticeable when I wished to man the boats at Dieppe. Besides those who had been called out, I had so many volunteers that I had to reject them all and even to reprimand some of the best of them who, knowing they would be rejected, started ahead without permission."

It is not too much to say that it was the nobles who gave most of their blood. They formed the framework of a relatively small army, in which foreign regiments played a conspicuous part. In proportion to their numbers, the

nobles contributed many more soldiers than the rest of the nation. Throughout the reign there was a steady sacrifice of the French aristocracy. The sacrifice had come to be regarded as inevitable. Yet if one reads the correspondence of the period with care, one realizes with what apprehension the parents at home followed the vicissitude of siege and battle. At the beginning of the War of the League of Augsburg, Bussy wrote: "I pity poor mothers like Madame de Saucour and Madame de Calvisson." This discreet and courageous lament reëchoed throughout the century. Only something like the forceful eloquence of Massillon in his "Oraison funèbre de Louis le Grand" can make us realize how deep was the abyss of sorrow caused by these wars, necessary as they were for the safety of the nation, and how large the sacrifice made by one great class of the country. "What," thunders the ecclesiastical orator, "will these superb monuments erected in our public squares recall to our descendants? . . . An entire century of horror and carnage, the flower of the nobility of France sent to the grave; they will recall a host of ancient families that are no more, a host of disconsolate mothers who still weep for their children."

These children were willingly sacrificed for the glory of the King and the grandeur of France. At the crossing of the Rhine on June 12, 1672, there was a veritable frenzy of heroism. Even the old Condé, like his young subordinates, courted danger and wounds under the eyes of his sovereign.

But despite the zeal of the French nobility and of most of the rest of the country, despite the ability, the genius of his generals, prodigious as was the industry of ministers

and even minor clerks, after all, it fell to the King to play the most important role in the wars which, for a century, protected France from the invader.

He was, at it were, Chief of the General Staff. One has but to read the correspondence and the military memoirs of the period to discover how constantly and intimately he kept in touch with everything that had to do with the maintenance of his armies and the direction of his campaigns—even those of minor importance. He made a thorough investigation of all plans of campaign and, when with the army in the field, he reviewed specific decisions. After consulting the experts and gaining the fullest possible knowledge of the subject, it was always the King himself who made the final decision. He appointed the order in which the troops would march and the hour when they would start. In his own hand he annotated his generals' reports and confidential letters from Louvois and his emissaries abroad. He could estimate the amount of ammunition and food needed almost to the pound, and could prepare an inventory of the equipment needed for a siege down to the slightest detail. "A thousand grenades, twenty pairs of *armes d'épreuve* and helmets, two thousand sand-bags, a hundred axes for the men who will attack the counterscarp . . . Fifteen hundred brush-hooks and five hundred axes to clear the way for the artillery." On June 1, 1672, when he was preparing for his famous crossing of the Rhine, he drew up the following general orders: "Tomorrow before daylight a detachment of a hundred men, properly equipped, will set out to prepare the roads, cut down hedges and do whatever their commander may think

advisable. . . . The troops will start at four o'clock—the mounted constabulary first, followed by the Count de Roye's brigade and then by those of Feuillée and Koenigsmarck; they will entrench themselves behind the wood . . . The infantry will follow behind and will halt out of sight behind the woods. . . . The Count de Soissons will command the infantry, the Grand Maître the artillery. Rochefort will accompany Genlis. The Chevalier de Lorraine will remain with me. Montal will command the advance guard that repairs the roads. Fourille will remain with me."

It will be seen that he does not neglect the slightest detail. Saint Simon accuses him of being overwhelmed by them. But, in his "Mémoires," he himself tells us that he devoted so much attention to detail merely to keep his ministers and clerks alert. He also found this an excellent means of keeping himself posted: "By attending to petty details from time to time, rather for relaxation than out of a sense of duty, one gradually picks up without effort a thousand odds and ends of information that are helpful when it comes to important decisions."

He wanted it thought that he did and saw everything. He had a quick, all-seeing eye that nothing ever escaped. Foreigners were amazed at his piercing glance and disconcertingly retentive memory. "Wherever he was," writes Primi Visconti, "in his rooms, in the chapel, or on the field, with a single glance he would take in the faces of all present. Once, when on horseback at Versailles, he was the only one to note that a thief had his hand in the pocket of young Villars-Orondate. . . . The last time he reviewed his mounted grenadiers, he noticed a horse he

had not seen for three years which had been captured from the garrison at Valenciennes; as it kicked dangerously, he warned the courtiers to beware of it."

He wished every officer to know that he had his eye on him personally. He knew them by name and wrote to them, or had letters written to them, assuring them of his devotion and affection. He lamented their deaths, was alarmed at the thought of their wounds, and cautioned them to take good care of their health. No military leader was ever so economical of what is now brutally termed "gun-fodder." He knew all too well the cost of a single regiment. But it was still more because of his natural humanity, his innate kindness that he had a horror of useless bloodshed. There are endless passages in his letters in which he expresses his solicitude for the wounded and orders that they be given every attention. "It grieves me deeply," he writes to the Comte de Coligny, "to see the length of the list of dead and wounded that you sent me, although I know that such a sacrifice was necessary. *You must see that the wounded receive every attention; go to see them in person on my behalf and tell them that I am counting on them to recover.*" He does not stop at platonic expression of sympathy. He has gifts sent to them: "six hundred livres for cavalry captains and three hundred for cornets and two each for those in the infantry." During the expedition to Barbary, he wrote the Duke de Beaufort: "Take great care of the sick and wounded. Tell them that I sympathize keenly with them in their suffering and assure them that their wounds will always be the highest of recommendations for them to me. . . . You may inform the soldiers that, far from abandoning them, I have ordered that they shall be given a bonus of a

sou a day, besides their discharge papers which entitles them to regular rations. Also say that *I wish the names of those who have particularly distinguished themselves.* Henceforth they must be provided with whatever work they are fitted for; if there is no employment for them some must be made; special care must be taken to see that they are properly lodged, so that they will not fall ill." And again, "Above all, the greatest care should be taken of the sick. *I cannot insist too strongly on this.*"

Thus he does not stop with complimenting the great leaders—such as the Duke de Vivonne, his former playmate, whom he treats like a comrade. He thinks also of the privates. He sought popularity with the man in the ranks, he would have had himself thought a soldier-king. In his youth he gave the most minute care to the recruiting, the equipment, and even the uniforms of his musketeers; he showed the same sort of interest in them that later Frederick William had in his grenadiers. He was constantly in contact with the troops and found such pleasure in reviewing them that the Parisians made fun of him for it; he kept them constantly on the alert and would put them through frequent manœuvres. At the age of fourteen he had his first lesson in military tactics under the supervision of illustrious military leaders. It should be noted that he followed in person all the campaigns in his reign until he was fifty-five years old. He did not leave his army until acute arthritis made horseback riding and camp life out of the question. As far as was possible for a sovereign who wished to be everywhere and to do everything himself, he tried to be a model soldier and to set a good example both in discipline and bravery. He knew that he was criticised for not exhibiting the rash

courage of a Francis I, or the contagious fire and dash of a Henri IV. Doubtless he did not possess the type of purely physical courage that comes from a quick, impetuous temperament. By nature he was deliberate; yet one might almost say that his heroism took a higher form since it represented the greatest possible sense of duty. Had he thought it his duty to sacrifice himself for the good of the State, he would have met death coolly. Whenever he had the opportunity, he demonstrated his courage before the troops. He exposed himself to danger beyond all reason; at times the soldiers themselves had to restrain him. At the siege of Mons in 1691, for instance, during one of his last campaigns, he endeavored to set a good example for the troops by affecting the greatest scorn for danger. The young Duke du Maine, less brave than he, wrote Madame de Maintenon: "The King is not keeping his word to you very well. For, besides over-working, he exposes himself to danger like, if I dare use the word, a young fool who has his reputation to make and wishes to show that he is unafraid."

It was deliberately and with calculation that the King behaved rashly at such moments. He thought it necessary to sustain the morale of the troops and he did it without hesitation. But he knew that the hot-headed bravery of a man like Francis I was foolish, that a king could not expose himself like a common soldier. He showed amazing good sense and judgment in distinguishing his own functions from those of his generals. He kept in close touch with all their preparations, he collaborated with them and gave them the benefit of the full weight of his authority and experience, but he left the actual execution of plans to those whom he judged more competent than he

to carry them out. He bowed to the military genius of a Turenne or a Condé. When the latter once congratulated him on the capture of a Flemish fortress, he answered: "Cousin, such approval as yours means much to a beginner in the art of war."

Active campaigns were but one of his many duties. He was Chief of Staff, Quartermaster General, Minister of Finance and of Foreign Affairs. All of that is implied in the conduct of a war. Campaigns must be planned, and money, troops, provisions, and ammunition stored. Public opinion at home and abroad must be moulded, for military campaigns need to be supported by diplomatic activity. With his amazing capacity for work, his ability to be everywhere and to attend to everything at once, he supervised all these tasks personally. His influence was felt strongly on the field of battle, along fronts either widely extended or far from one another. In those days French troops were fighting in Catalonia, Provence, Italy, along the Rhine, in Flanders and along the Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea coasts. Thus it frequently happened that generals, isolated in their own sections and knowing nothing about diplomatic schemes or the state of public opinion in France or in the rest of Europe, would not understand the King's orders and would criticize him severely for his procrastination, his hesitation, or for ordering a retreat. They saw only one side of the question, whereas their great leader saw all.

As a matter of fact, Louis XIV's strategy was based upon two general principles. One was to husband his troops, his munitions, his money, and his fortifications. He knew that wars lasted a long time and that he stood alone against the world. When the psychological mo-

ment came, he wished to be able to negotiate with troops and fortresses to back him up. In the second place, he was determined to gain the most permanent returns possible from whatever successes he had. With the limited means at his disposal (he had no such budgets or reserves of men as we have today), he wished to give the impression of tremendous power. He did not hesitate to resort to a bluff in order to do so; he would often exaggerate the importance of his victories and the number of troops at his disposal. He had no hesitation about placing the laurel wreath upon his own brow and brandishing the thunder bolt. What was termed "the campaign to glorify the King" was only a means of increasing and supplementing his actual power by literary innuendo.

But the King's ceaseless activity is not the whole story. His most admirable and remarkable qualities were his ability to throw himself whole-heartedly into his task and his real liking for his profession. Never has anyone loved a military career as he loved it. In the field he took the deepest interest in the least detail of a manœuvre; he gave himself heart and soul to it as he had done as a child in the gardens of the Tuileries or the Palais Royal when he would get overheated in attacking his toy citadel. Even in his office at Saint Germain or Compiègne he would work himself into a state of feverish excitement plotting out new campaigns or new combinations of one sort or another. During the War of the Spanish Succession, he wrote Marshal de Turenne: "I am working on some great tactical plans for both infantry and cavalry. I have the whole thing in my head, I will do my best to work it out, whatever happens." And a few days later: "I am working

upon some plans that I think may prove successful. *Ah! but they seem fine to me!*" When a town was being besieged or an important engagement was taking place he was beside himself with impatience. When the Prince of Orange laid siege to Charleroi in 1672, he wrote Louvois, who was with the army: "Send me frequent messengers, *for I am tormented by anxiety.*" It kept him from sleeping. He would get up at one o'clock in the morning to dictate an order or jot down an idea that had come to him as he tossed in bed. When finally, overcome by fatigue, he fell asleep, he would have nightmares and would talk aloud and wave his arms about.

His remarks about "the good of the service" were not limited to his subordinates; he himself thought of nothing else. He communicated his enthusiasm to ministers, generals, clerks, and officers of all ranks. The words: "*In the service of the King,*" came to have a glamour and a prestige that we can no longer comprehend. In the service of the King! That indeed was a service in which there was no vestige of servitude, one into which a man entered out of love and enthusiasm rather than in a spirit of self-sacrifice or obedience. It was a means of expressing personal devotion to the sovereign, the gift of oneself, heart and soul, not to some impersonal ideal, but to a human being of superior attainments by whom one felt oneself loved, understood, appreciated, encouraged, and supported in what one was doing, to a great and generous man who delighted in all forms of beauty and loved heroism, and tasks performed with real finish, who would grant magnificent rewards for great achievements and for whom it was more a pleasure than a duty to sacrifice oneself. In the service of the King! It meant the losing of

all old fetters—feudal, municipal, ecclesiastic, local, and provincial. It meant throwing off the yoke of a thousand petty and niggardly tyrants, to owe obedience to a single master, one who had vision, who opened unbounded careers to his subjects. In the service of the King! It meant liberty and having a share in a tremendous and glorious achievement!

In reading Louis XIV's letters and military memoirs, beneath the commonplaceness of business routine, one feels the undercurrent of enthusiasm, the widespread confidence of the nation in the plans and the intelligence of its leader. How he exults when success crowns his efforts! In what a tone—and yet how simply—he announces the capture of a city or the winning of a battle! After the surrender of Cambrai on May 18, 1677, he writes Colbert: "I trust that the date on this letter will not displease you. I personally find it very pleasant for a King of France." Likewise in June, 1673, while he was besieging Maestricht: "I have asked your son to request that a painter be sent here, for I believe he will find a very pretty sight. All goes well!" And at the capture of Besançon: "I haven't any doubt that you will be happy to learn of my success at Besançon. I am delighted at the public's joy. Bonjour!" But things did not always go well. When he met with reverses, life was no longer worth living. In vain did he attempt to conceal the agony he suffered; it affected him even physically. At the slightest evidence of the return of good fortune, he expanded and made no effort to hide his relief. The first time he received Marshal de Villars after his success at Friedlingen, he told him: "I am as much a Frenchman as a King! Anything that dims the glory of the nation concerns me more than any

other consideration. Chamillart comes here to work with me toward six o'clock—and for more than three months he has had only unpleasant news. *The hour of his arrival affected the flow of my blood.* You have cured me. *Rest assured of my gratitude.*"

His greatest interest is the State—the nation, France. These words recur constantly in what he writes and in his conversation. In the preface to his reminiscences on the campaign of 1673 he could say with absolute truth: "I should like to make some progress, to maintain and increase the power and prestige of France. *In laboring for her, I labor for myself;* it is most agreeable to realize that my own glory is bound up with that of as rich and powerful a State as this." He never forgets the marriage that took place at his coronation in the Cathedral at Rheims. *He is the man who is married to France.* He has endeavored to add to the greatness of his mystic spouse by his success at arms. He has not always succeeded. Toward the end of his reign, disillusioned, the old King exclaimed to his grandson, Philip V: "If you think it easy and pleasant to be a king, you are much mistaken." He is disenchanted, but his dignity does not allow him to admit it. And he would be wrong to do so. The advantages he has gained are splendid enough and lasting enough to console him for a thousand passing disappointments.

In his heart is he satisfied with what he has accomplished? Would this France, whom he has loved and served so devotedly, be greater had he been solely an administrator and not a soldier?

PART FIVE

THE MAN WHO WAS MARRIED TO FRANCE

"I am as much a Frenchman as a King! Whatever dims the glory of France concerns me beyond all other consideration."—
"*Mémoires*" *of Marshal de Villars.*

CHAPTER I

"GENTLEMAN, THE KING!"

BEFORE considering his struggles with domestic problems, let us pause a moment to look at the man himself. Let us visualize him at the height of his reign, as he was for instance in 1682, the approximate date of the bust by Coysevox. What were his mental, moral, and physical characteristics after a long and almost uninterrupted period of prosperity and on the eve of the signing of a treaty that was to leave him the arbiter of the fate of Europe? What effect have his power and his unceasing contact with men of all sorts had on him?

It is almost mid-day. All through the apartments at Versailles, newly built and dazzling to the eye with their mirrors, their gilt, their freshly painted decorations, a host of courtiers await the appearance of the Master who will soon pass by on his way to mass. In his bedroom, His Majesty chats with his children, intimate friends, architects, and servants.

At last the door to the royal apartment is swung wide and in the respectful, half-curious silence the usher announces:

"Gentlemen, the King!"

He seems rather tall; at least he is of more than average

height, with large shoulders and just a suspicion of stoutness. He carries himself gracefully and with assurance; his step is lithe and elastic, like a dancer about to glide into the rhythm of a dance, or a horseman about to spring into the saddle. He is certainly no handsomer than he used to be when he courted the Cardinal's niece. His cheeks are full and still pock-marked; his out-of-door life has made them almost purple. His costume is simple, compared with those generally worn at that time. He has dressed, one feels, with the speed of a man who knows the value of time. His brother accompanies him and makes a rather pleasant contrast, with his plumes and ribbons, his rings and jewelry elaborate enough to arouse the envy of an Oriental Queen. The King's habit is of brown cloth and is without decoration except for the vest; he wears no rings; his only diamonds are on the buckles of his shoes, his garters, and his hat. He comes toward us, gloved and hatted, cane in hand, and, despite the relative simplicity of his appearance and the fact that his face is certainly not handsome, he gives a vivid impression of grace and majesty. His regal and imposing manner, so noble and so becoming, now seems natural to him; it was not so at first. By careful planning and the exercise of will power, he has achieved the appearance and carriage he thinks he should have. He is like the nineteenth century actress who was born a brunette, but who in the end had the complexion, the mannerisms and even the temperament of a blonde. In the same way Louis XIV, rather shy as a youth, awkward and embarrassed when meeting people, now gives the impression that everything he does is done without effort, with innate ease and grace.

He comes forward, smiling or preoccupied as the case

may be. On all sides people step forward to hand him petitions or to remind him of requests they have made. Some of them, bolder or on more intimate terms with him than the others, even whisper in his ear—if one is to believe Saint Simon. He answers with the set formula: "We shall see!" Occasionally, if he thinks fit, he adds a few words of encouragement or a promise. But he can fix a cold and fear-inspiring stare upon one who is unacceptable or distasteful to him. His majestic eyes flash fire. Magistrates stop in the midst of their addresses when he stares at them. He can inspire real terror.

But usually he has a pleasant and paternal air. At times he puts himself out to please and at such moments, he is truly enchanting. The Princess Palatine, who had a secret fondness for her august brother-in-law, does not hesitate to admit this. "When the King," she writes, "wishes to be pleasant, no one in the world can be more engaging. There is no hint of constraint about him; he has such perfect politeness and charm that one is immediately fond of him." He must indeed have been fascinating if people remembered his charm even after his death, after the reverses and suffering of the end of his reign when everyone reproached him. In the presence of the Parlement of Paris, beneath the Gothic arches of the Sainte-Chapelle, Massillon pronounced the following eulogy before the catafalque of the dead King; the discreet and respectful reservations he makes serve only to give more weight to his praise: "As you know, there was nothing forbidding or formidable about His Majesty. When he received one at all, he did so charmingly; his manner of granting favors was more welcome than the favors themselves; in conversation *he had a gracious consideration for others and a*

gift for uttering the very words his listener most wished to hear. We left his presence enraptured and regretted that his loneliness and preoccupation rendered those moments increasingly rare. A loyal nation, we have always been eager to see our kings; and kings always profit by appearing before subjects who love them."

There we have the other side of the picture. The King is taken to task for not appearing often enough before his subjects and for talking too little. He did so deliberately and for good reason.

Let us observe him at a meeting of his Council. He is alert, he listens intently, but seldom speaks. Whenever he says anything he wants it to be significant. If he is receiving a delegation or answering the address of an ambassador, he limits himself to a few words, but those words are given with striking ease of manner and felicity of expression. He has the most perfect command of French; he is, indeed, "monarch in the realm of fine diction." One realizes that he might, had he wished, have rivalled the great orators. No one, for instance, could tell a story so well. Even his inveterate enemy, Saint Simon, was forced to admit that. But he disliked exaggerated or indiscreet talk. He looked upon reticence as the most important virtue in a king, and as an absolute necessity in State affairs. Foreigners were struck by this. "The King," says Primi Visconti, "maintains the most impenetrable secrecy about affairs of State. The ministers attend council meetings, but he confides his plans to them only when he has reflected at length upon them and has come to a definite decision. I wish you might see the King. His expression is inscrutable; his eyes like those

BUST OF LOUIS XIV

By Bernin (Versailles)

BUST OF LOUIS XIV

By Coysevox (Versailles)

of a fox. He never discusses State affairs except with his ministers in Council. When he speaks to courtiers he refers only to their respective prerogatives or duties. Even the most frivolous of his utterances has the air of being the pronouncement of an oracle."

How he guarded his military and diplomatic plans! In the Spring of 1677, while he was thought to be devoting all his attention to his love affair with the lovely de Ludres, he was actually planning an offensive in Flanders. Silence, was his motto. "A King," he remarks in his "Mémoires," "should listen oftener than he talks, for it is difficult to talk much without saying too much." Just as he guards his tongue, so, too, he must control his expression; sometimes it takes an heroic effort to conceal his emotion and to restrain his resentment. "Since we have a divine task to perform on earth, we should give the impression of being incapable of any emotion that might jeopardize it. But we are sometimes unable to deny our nature in spite of ourselves; *when we feel such vulgar sentiments in our hearts, we should at least strive to conceal them before they become prejudicial to the welfare of the public, the most important consideration in our lives.*"

Not only did the King hold himself to absolute secrecy about State affairs, but he imposed the same rule upon others. Especially was he on his guard against the avowed enemies of France; he did not wish the representatives of foreign powers to have too clear an idea of what was happening in France. "Count de Ferrero, the ambassador from Savoy," writes Visconti, "did not even know that Sicily was an island. . . . I judge, therefore, that he will prove acceptable at Court, for the King, as I have remarked before, is not fond of keen observers." His mo-

tives are easily understandable; he dreaded spies and those who could not hold their tongues.

Impenetrable, close-lipped, the King was sincerely fond of his profession. We have already seen with what interest he threw himself into all questions pertaining to war and the army. His interest in the other branches of government was just as keen. He considered the most important quality in a good ruler to be a real love for his profession. "In general," he writes his son, "you will find yourself powerless to handle either important decisions or minor details unless you really like them and get pleasure from attending to them." He was accused of excessive egotism. But his egotism amounted almost to a holy zeal that subordinated everything to the service of the State—and he, as he so often announced, was the first of its servants.

He never uttered that absurd statement that is credited to him: "L'Etat, c'est moi." ("I am the State"). Such a point of view is diametrically opposed to his.

Far from wishing to absorb the State into his own person, he held that he had been born only to serve it: "the welfare of the public, the one most important consideration in our lives." And he required his ministers and officers to devote themselves to this service with the same intense interest and self-sacrifice that he himself showed. He wished them to be bound up heart and soul in their tasks. Thus, he said, he did not like to entrust even the most petty commission to anyone who was in love; such, he declared, were "too much the slaves of their passion."

He was a glutton for work and drove his collaborators with a mercilessness unimaginable in a modern executive. When he was praising the amazing activity of Napoleon's

clerks, Balzac recalled that they were only following in the tradition established under Louis XIV. The King himself did almost as much work as his ministers and their assistants. From the moment he took personal charge of the government he made himself follow a routine that, he said, included "working regularly twice a day." When there was urgent business to be done he would give up all distractions, or would limit them severely, and shut himself up in his office. At the death of Louvois one can easily imagine how overwhelmed he was with work and to what lengths he was forced in the attempt to make up for the loss of such a collaborator. At that time Madame de Maintenon wrote one of her friends: "Anyone seeing him at close range would be amazed at his activity. The Council meets more frequently than ever, as there is more business to be attended to; he also devotes two or three hours a day to hunting. [We should not forget that he looked upon the hunt as a formal and obligatory function.] When possible he gets back by six o'clock and from then until ten *he devotes his time uninterruptedly to reading, writing, and dictating.* Often he dismisses the Princesses immediately after supper so as to get some despatch or other ready for a messenger."

If he drove himself thus, it was "to get to the bottom of things," as he put it, and not to let a single detail escape him. Among the general rules of conduct that he recommended to his son, he emphasized the following strongly: "First of all, you must know intimately every department of the government, for a King not thus prepared must rely continually upon his subordinates, and consequently seldom can he escape acting as they dictate." He fell back upon the assistance of his ministers in matters

he had not been able to study personally. He made them place the whole problem before him in a clear and orderly manner. Afterwards, relying on his experience, his logic and his common sense, he came to a decision. Common sense was his great touchstone. "One only gets it," he writes, "as a result of long experience, or by constant and unceasing reflection upon a series of incidents of the same general nature." What a delicate and precise instrument may be forged when a mind such as his is submitted to discipline like that!

The King's ultimate decisions were to be based not merely upon common sense and a just appreciation of circumstances, but they must also be in keeping with the dignity of his throne. He saw things on a large, even a grandiose, scale. He was most sensitive concerning the dignity of the French name and all that concerned the national honor and prestige. He even went so far as to dismiss Arnauld de Pomponne, his Foreign Minister, because, as he said, "everything that passes through his hands loses *the force and grandeur that should be used in executing the orders of a King of France who has not been unfortunate. . . .*"

As one learns more about him, one comes, as was said at the beginning of the book, to look upon him as the highest type of the Latin that the world has ever seen. From his Spanish blood he inherited a feeling for pomp and majesty; from the Italians, his taste for pleasure and luxury, for all forms of art, his intellectual adaptability, and his sense of the practical. But above all he had the French balance and common sense.

Yet despite his many endowments and the attention he gave to his duties, he sometimes made mistakes. He ad-

mitted it without false pride. He never thought himself infallible; neither did he claim to control the course of fate. But whatever his misfortunes, he persevered to the end with indomitable courage. After suffering his severest reverses in the War of the Spanish Succession, he wrote the following note on the margin of a letter from his minister, Chamillart, in which the latter had admitted himself tired and discouraged. "We are all greatly to be pitied, but we must not give up and we must *do our best*."

Fearless, determined, methodical, based upon wide experience, we might summarize Louis XIV's political policy in those words: "we must do our best."

And now let us observe him in the intimacy of his own circle, surrounded by his wife, his children, and his close friends.

His first concern is that they shall think him kindly and good-natured; he looks upon severity as a check to be used only when absolutely necessary. A King, he thinks, should be kind and paternal; kindness he considers one of the important, if not the most important of a sovereign's virtues. He had no need to acquire it. Even Saint Simon admits that "he was born good-natured and fair-minded." He inflicted punishment regretfully and would have thought it unworthy of a man of his position to preserve the slightest resentment against the culprit. He had, of course, to take certain precautions. In the end he pardoned Fénelon, who had insulted him outrageously, just as he forgave Bussy-Rabutin, an unbearable pest. The latter had not only spent all his time "slandering everyone," to use the King's words, and written vile and scandalous books in which he defamed the characters

of various women, including his cousin, Madame de Sévigné, but when the young sovereign had been sick and at death's door, he had circulated an epigram, closing with the atrocious lines:

They say that God sent him to us.
If He would only take him back! . . .

For a number of years in the interests of peace at Court the King kept him in exile on his country estate. Finally in 1682 when he was at Saint Germain he allowed the dangerous gossip to come back. The penitent describes his return to grace as follows: "Turning from his prie-dieu, the King came toward me. As he reached the door, I threw myself upon my knees and embraced them. Leaning far down—for I was almost flat on the floor—he took me by the shoulders and said: 'Stand up, Bussy!'

"As I did not move, he repeated in a more gracious tone:

" 'Come! Stand up, Bussy!'

"That touched me and I got up, my eyes filled with tears. He then said: 'I am happy to see you again. We have not seen each other in a long time!'

"I answered: 'Seventeen years, Sire! But I am overjoyed to be back; and your Majesty's greeting makes it plain that he has forgiven me.'

" 'Yes,' he said, '*I have forgotten everything.* I was not always pleased with your conduct, but now I am . . . and I have been for some time.'

" 'You would always have been, Sire,' I answered, 'had you known how I felt toward you at the bottom of my heart.'

"At that, I threw myself at his feet again. *The King pressed my shoulder,* and then walked on. I noted, as did

Marshal de Duras and President de Mesmes, that he seemed somewhat touched as he left."

When he was sure that he was among honest, dependable people, Louis XIV was most easy-going. He allowed them to be ill-humored, querulous, even disrespectful. Mademoiselle de Coëtlogon, one of the Queen's ladies in waiting, who became annoyed at the King, cut him, would not speak to him and even refused to wait on him. She lost her temper one day and attempted to scratch him with her finger nails. The King, knowing her mood to be due to disappointment in love, only laughed at her; in the end he married her, angry lamb that she was, to the husband of her dreams—not neglecting to endow the couple with a handsome dowry. He would lay aside his fearsome majesty to take part in the amusements, and even in the rather coarse jokes of his courtiers. He loved to tease Madame de Thiange, Madame de Montespan's sister: "The King," recounts Saint Simon, "had hairs put in her butter and even in her tarts, for she was exceedingly fastidious. She would scream and rail and belch at the King, who laughed uproariously at her. . . . Sometimes she would pretend to throw scraps of food at him across the table." It was this same woman who boasted arrogantly of her family before Louis XIV and pretended to look on him as a parvenu. "Members of our family," she would tell him, "were kings in our provinces. We, too, were surrounded by officers and gentlemen in waiting." At such moments the Sun King put aside his dignity and became once more the lighthearted youth he had been throughout his childhood and adolescence.

At heart—as has been said and should be repeated emphatically—he was democratic. He disapproved of

young Abbés of good family who thought that they had the right to begin their ecclesiastical careers as bishops while gentlemen of even better family were not too proud to serve as privates and to shoulder a musket in his guard. If, for reasons of discipline, he held strictly to titles, to formal ceremonies and matters of etiquette, he never attached undue importance to such things and did not wish them abused. Madame de Maintenon reminds us that he had the Dauphin brought up as simply as a young bourgeois, and did not allow him to be called "Monseigneur," by his intimates. "In familiar conversation," records a well-informed contemporary, "he was never addressed as 'Monsieur le Dauphin,' nor as 'Your Highness,' 'Your Royal Highness,' or with any titles of that sort, nor was he addressed in the third person. This was in accordance with the King's instructions; he set an example that might profitably be followed by those who delude themselves with vanities."

In the army, the Dauphin had to submit to the strictest discipline. When the Duke du Maine performed his first military service he had to do sentry duty in the trenches. In the field, the King himself lived the life of an ordinary soldier, eating on the corner of a table whatever happened to be at hand, and sleeping in a hayloft or stable. In the "Mémoires" of the Grande Mademoiselle there is an interesting account of the campaign in Flanders in 1667. It pictures a strange combination of pomp and simplicity with an occasional touch of uncouthness.

The King was easily adaptable to circumstances, just as he was easily accessible to those who wished to see him. He made those around him feel that he shared their joys and sorrows; in the case of his real friends, his ministers,

or his generals he actually did so. Louis XIV was at heart sentimental and affectionate and was easily moved to tears. He was likely to weep on any pretext—a death, a separation, a departure. He reminds us of Sainte Beuve's beautiful verses on Racine:

He wept like one just banished, in dismay . . .
Tears had a certain subtle charm for him.
He bid a last adieu, with sad eyes dim,
To men like La Fontaine and Champmeslé.

I do not know whether "tears had a charm" for Louis XIV, as for Racine, but there is no doubt that he was quick to give way to them, and that he had some of the sensitiveness of his court poet.

And yet he was accused of being hard-hearted or indifferent upon the occasion of the death of his most faithful ministers. His critics forget that when both Colbert and Louvois died, Louis XIV felt that he could justly complain about the attitude of them both.

Yet, if one reads the note written in his own hand on the margin of a letter from Seignelay (Colbert's son) announcing his father's hopeless condition, one is not inclined to think the King hard-hearted or ungrateful. "Your father's condition," he tells the son, "touches me deeply. Stay at his side as long as you can be of assistance and do not allow your grief to keep you from comforting him in every way possible, as becomes a dutiful son. I still hope that God will not see fit to take him from this world, where he is so necessary for the welfare of the State. I hope this with all my heart because of the deep affection I have always felt for him and because of my fondness for you and all other members of his family."

Louvois, of course, died during a war. Louis XIV, surrounded by enemies, tried to give the impression that the death of such a minister would in no way weaken him and that he could get along perfectly well without him. This was good strategy, but it did not deceive those who knew the actual state of affairs.

In truth, Louis XIV desired the affection both of his ministers and his subjects. He was the kind of person whom people loved and even worshipped; as far as possible, as far as was compatible with the dignity of his position, he reciprocated these sentiments. "However much," he wrote, "he may love glory, a good prince cannot be happy if he has not the love as well as the admiration of those who serve him." He responded to such sentiments with a paternal solicitude: "I would rather," he writes, "maintain the role of Father of my people than that of Father of my children. The latter is the gift of nature, the former an acquired faculty."

THIS MAN, with his stern will and "soft heart" (to use his own words) was, as far as his multiple duties permitted, a good father, a generous and affectionate brother, a thoughtful and attentive—if unfaithful—husband. He longed desperately for sympathy (the word keeps reoccurring in his "Mémoires") and for someone in whom he could have complete confidence. Unhappily married to a woman who was both ugly and a nonentity, he turned to his mistresses hoping to find in them the qualities he sought. In this he was deceived. After frequent disillusionments and the terrible ordeal Montespan forced upon him when he was past forty he thought that in Madame de Maintenon he had found the person he had so long sought.

Madame de Sévigné tells us that Madame de Maintenon opened up to the King "a new world that he had never before known—a world of friendly communion, of conversation without constraint or wrangling." He had had his share of the latter. Tired of a mistress who was essentially vile and malicious, an aggressive, abusive, violent mistress who constantly upbraided him, he sank back into the unknown bliss of a woman's friendship. This friendship was actually love, but it was love shorn of the baser qualities of passion. It was a new and delightful experience for the King. He had been spoiled by the charm of Madame de Montespan's conversation (though her letters, it might be remarked, are amazingly stilted and labored for those of a woman renowned for her wit). Madame de Maintenon captivated him less by the charm of her conversation than by the range of the topics she would discuss with him. In this, too, she opened up a new world to him, a world of spirituality. A king, doubtless, was not born to be a theologian or a mystic. They are entirely unfair who find fault with him for having failed to understand the "Augustinus," or the subtleties of Divine Love as expounded by Fénelon or Madame Guyon. Such topics were not for him; he had other things to do besides burying himself in ponderous folios and books on controversial subjects. Moreover, there is no doubt that religion with him was somewhat perfunctory and formal; his discussions with Madame de Maintenon tended to purify and exalt his religious point of view. She opened up to him ideas and feelings that he had scarcely known existed before.

What most attracted him in this woman, older than he, was her utter devotion to him and her unselfishness.

She told him frankly: "Sire, I want nothing for myself. Honors and riches would only burden me. I wish only your soul and that not for myself, but that I may give it to God. My mission here on earth is to assist you in the salvation of your soul. I live and remain near you only for that purpose."

It is easy to picture the effect of such words on this hardened sinner, still tainted as he was with the memory of his long adultery and hoping to rid himself of all vestiges of his sinful past. He not only accepted the assistance and friendship that she offered, but he agreed to marry her. He was democratic and had no class prejudices. He had barely escaped marrying Marie Mancini, an adventuress. It took even more courage to marry Madame Scarron, the widow of a poor, crippled man of letters whose unconventional life had caused something of a scandal. Notwithstanding all this, he married her. He thought no price too high to pay for such devotion.

Yet once more his expectations were disappointed. His new wife objected to all his tastes, his natural instincts, to his most intimate and personal reactions. One cannot imagine a more ill-assorted couple. She had not the slightest touch of feminine delicacy or tenderness; she was scarcely a woman at all. Her spiritual director had to compel her to fulfil her marital duties. Godet des Marais, Bishop of Chartres, her adviser, had to send her such surprising exhortations as this: "You must be a refuge and protection for this weak man, for without you he is lost. . . . What a virtue it will be to do in a spirit of self-sacrifice what so many other women are prompted to do out of mere selfish passion!" Moreover, she had no æsthetic feeling; she failed utterly to understand the King's

taste for fine buildings and beautiful objects of all kinds. She had no political judgment and even worse, she was a defeatist at critical moments and advised her husband to do what was opposed to the national interest.

The King suffered cruelly from his companion's shortcomings; from that bourgeois mediocrity of hers which might have been quite suitable in the directress of the convent of Saint Cyr, but which was out of place in a Queen of France. Nevertheless, he thought so highly of her fidelity and devotion that he bore with her to the very last. Although she took no active part in the affairs of the nation—except in the appointment of bishops and the allotment of benefices—Louis XIV went over business details with his ministers in her presence. She was very acute and shrewd and a good judge of character; consequently, although she seemed preoccupied and inattentive, he hoped that she would detect the wiles and subtle intrigues of his ministers and would put him on his guard. Thus, despite all their differences, he remained attached to her. Without any distortion of the truth, as he lay on his deathbed, he was able to tell her: "I have always loved and respected you."

His thirst for sympathy and affection unassuaged, the King had to go his way quite alone. He could hope for no consolation from children or relatives. His brother, entirely under the sway of worthless favorites, was the most flighty and unreliable of creatures. Louis XIV was wise not to allow him any share in the government. In so doing he was in no way prompted by jealousy or autocratic selfishness, but by simple prudence. As for his children, legitimate and otherwise, he knew the Dauphin too well to have any illusions about him. He was quite

justified in mistrusting the bigoted Duke of Burgundy, wrapped up in the schemes of a group of visionaries and perverted by Fénelon's utopian dreams. Only the bastards remained, and the King had a secret partiality for them. There is certainly no doubt that the Duke du Maine was more intelligent than Monseigneur.

The King also showed marked favoritism toward some of his courtiers; such men as Vardes, Lauzun, and La Rochefoucauld. But he knew full well that he could place only the most limited confidence in them. He saw clearly through superficial appearances into the inner rottenness or mediocrity of men such as these, interested only in intrigues and debauchery. Moreover, he knew himself to be surrounded by enemies. He constantly received threatening letters. Vile poems, in which he himself was libelled and his dearest projects flouted, would reach his hands. Almost every member of his family was poisoned. He himself was threatened constantly. None of these details escaped him. He knew, too, that at critical moments he had been abandoned by his own ministers. He was, as he himself said, "the only one to love the State." Yet he was never—or never for long—in despair. He never differentiated between the man and the sovereign in himself. Despite reverses, the many unpleasantnesses of his profession and frequent treachery, he continued to the very end to "do his best," to serve faithfully in that station in life in which God had placed him—in short, to be the King.

And no one has ever performed that task more thoroughly, more magnificently, than he; no one has ever looked the part more completely. Just as an extremely

devout and religious person can sum up in himself the whole conception of Christianity so completely as to render it obvious to any onlooker by the mere manner in which he kneels or folds his hands, so Louis XIV summed up in himself the whole conception of monarchy. Everything he did was done as a king should do it. One might say that never for a moment did he forget that he was king.

Undoubtedly, his intimate, his human qualities should not be passed over in silence, but to stress them would be to distort our picture of him. His most distinguishing characteristics were his majestic appearance, what was called his "grand air," his gravity, his measured bearing. He himself learned dignity and he forced that same characteristic upon the nation, inclined as it was toward levity and frivolity. The sincerity and frankness of a ruler like Henri IV approached the national idea. Louis XIV was less Gaul than Latin. Through him the dignity of the ancient Romans became an integral part of the manners and customs, the literature, even the thought of France. There is a famous page in Sainte Beuve's writings in which he remarks this influence of the King's. Old courtiers, accustomed as they were to the easy-going irregularity of France during the Fronde and under the Regency, found it difficult to accustom themselves to the new discipline. In his "Mémoires," La Fare bewails the King's "naturally pedantic and austere disposition." He is plainly exaggerating. It is none the less true that even in his youth he offended many by his insistence upon order and moderation in everything—one might almost term it his asceticism. Others, however, were pleasantly surprised. "I assure you," wrote Primi Visconti, "that ex-

cept for his amorous inclinations and his ambition to increase the size of his kingdom by conquest [we should remember that Visconti was a foreigner], it would be impossible to find a more upright, a more moderate, a more exemplary man anywhere. *One might almost say that he was a saint.*"

Once again the description is not quite accurate. But the very exaggeration shows how impressed contemporaries were by his dignity, his high moral and intellectual integrity. There we have the true Louis XIV. The rather affected, puffed-up hero, whose praises were sung by contemporary writers, is an invention of political necessity, and, it should never be forgotten, of the vanity of the nation itself. The King assumed his god-like pose to overawe his enemies—and the nation very complacently worshipped itself in the person of its sovereign. In the old days, Louis XIV was the object of exactly the same sort of bombastic eulogy which modern authors now address to France herself—that flow of conventional eloquence that makes foreigners accuse France of imperialistic ambitions.

His correspondence shows how little value he attached to such flattery. No one could be more practical, more opposed to clap-trap than he. He was wide awake in every sense of the term, as we shall see when we consider his reflections upon "the profession of a king."

CHAPTER II

LOUIS XIV, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER

IT WAS NOT until the death of Mazarin that Louis XIV really understood what it meant to be King of France; at last he realized how vast was his authority, how unbounded the field that lay open to his passion for glory. He was exalted, his whole being felt this new stimulus; there was a new note of loftiness in his desire for power. In his "Mémoires" he tried to give words to this intoxicating and confused emotion, this realization, as it were, that he was more than human. "I realized," he writes, "that I was King; for that I had been born. A sweet exaltation permeated me that you will never understand until you experience it yourself."

When a king has such warmth and is so thrilled with pride and energy, it is not surprising that he should love his profession and devote himself conscientiously to it. It is difficult at a later period to analyze one's ideas and sensations at such a time, but Louis XIV resolved to do so. He did it, first of all, for his own satisfaction, to clarify his ideas; in the second place for the instruction of his son; and lastly for posterity, "in order to put historians upon the right path," he says, "if, as a result of misunderstanding my plans and the reasons for them they have

strayed from the path of truth." These words apply especially to the many historians who have neglected his "Mémoires." The "Mémoires" were never finished, but they are complete enough to give us the King's opinions on most subjects. By gathering up the disconnected references and ideas we are able to piece together his exact theory of the monarchical power. He took the trouble to write down his ideas himself, or, to have them written down under his personal supervision and to re-read and revise them. Thus there is no danger of crediting him with opinions he never actually held. He sits at his desk and lectures to us on the French monarchy.

He begins by differentiating between spiritual and temporal powers. He is firmly convinced that he holds his own power directly from God, the source of all authority. In that he is merely following the theory of the Gallican theologians. He did not, as is frequently asserted, originate this idea himself; it was current in France long before his time and had always been combated by the Church. The Church admitted the divine right of kings only when they ruled with the sanction of popular approval.

Louis XIV agreed with the Gallican doctors and jurists in holding that the power of the king was directly delegated to him by God, without any intermediary whatsoever. He looked upon the unction administered to a king at his coronation as a proof and outward sign of this; he considered it, as it were, an eighth sacrament. He, like Popes and bishops, was consecrated. Moreover, he knew, or thought he knew, within exactly what limits he might

exercise this divinely delegated power. To the Pope and the priests fell the obligation of caring for his subjects' souls; to him the duty of safeguarding their material interests. Thus, at the very beginning he drew a sharp dividing line. Once the premise was admitted, there could be no misunderstanding of the practical application of the theory. The temporal and spiritual powers were to be developed side by side, as if the State could be and should be wholly secular. Louis XIV's Gallican advisers might urge him to pass upon spiritual questions, he himself may have felt tempted to do so, but in the end he always refused to do so, and bowed in submission to the authority of the Pope. He might question the limits of that authority, the authority itself, never.

The King was naturally anxious not to share this power. There was to be no division of it, no favorites, no prime ministers, no sovereign legislative assemblies. He scorned rulers who were "at the mercy of rash popular assemblies." To the best of his ability, he safeguarded his sovereignty, his absolute freedom to do as he saw fit—France encouraged him to do so; such a course corresponded with his ideal of sovereignty, and, to a certain extent, the dictates of his conscience. He so distrusted ministers, acquaintances, and favorites that one who wished to suggest a decision to him, or to induce him to make an appointment, had to go about it in the most indirect and subtle manner. Even Madame de Maintenon with all her craft and cleverness never dared propose what she wished directly. She feigned indifference to the one she favored, for had she so much as allowed the King to guess her desires, it would have reacted unfavorably to her candidate.

Thus he was determined to accept no limitations upon

his sovereign power, save those of justice and reason. Again and again he identified the authority of the Prince with Reason. This theory was in perfect accord with the Cartesian philosophy; in propounding it the King was at one with the important currents of thought of his age. And it was this rational quality which, according to him, distinguished the authority of the monarch from all others. "There is no governor," he writes, "who does not usurp privileges to which he has no title, no army that does not impose on civilians, no gentleman who doesn't oppress the peasants, no tax collector, public servant or constable who, within his own sphere, has not been guilty of criminal insolence. . . . Instead of having one sovereign power as they should, nations are subject to the whims of a thousand tyrants. Moreover, the orders of a Prince are invariably reasonable and moderate, because they are based upon reason, while those of usurpers, based as they are upon undisciplined human passions, are always immoderate and unfair."

Thus the King was governed by reason, but reason tempered by common sense derived from wide practical experience. One might almost say that in Louis XIV common sense reached the heights of inspiration. It was this perfectly balanced judgment that permitted him to counteract the tendencies of such ministers as Colbert and Louvois to over-emphasize and over-organize their own departments and thus impair the efficient working of the rest of the government, to carry their programmes to logical but immoderate conclusions. His unerring common sense kept his aims and ambitions within the range of the practical, his broad comprehension of the various conflicting interests of different governmental departments

allowed him to correlate them so that the actions of one would never interfere with those of another.

Lastly, he considered that he alone was competent to decide what was best for the State; his functions included all branches of the government, whereas each minister concentrated upon his own specialty alone. His reasons coincided with reasons of State. "It is always," he writes, "worse for the public to control the government than to support even a bad government which is directed by Kings *whom God alone can judge*. . . . Those acts of Kings that are in seeming violation of the rights of their subjects are based upon reasons of State—the most fundamental of all motives, as everyone will admit, but one often misunderstood by those who do not rule."

WHAT terrifying words those, "Kings, whom God alone can judge!" But Louis XIV realized full well the appalling responsibility that rested upon a man endowed with such power.

To do his duty, to govern personally and in accordance with the dictates of reason and justice, he knew that he must not only take constant and unremitting pains, but he must also surround himself with the best possible assistants, so that the royal decisions should be based upon a thorough knowledge of the facts.

It was for this reason that Louis XIV worked so industriously and even in his old age put in eight or nine hours a day upon the problems of State. He wished personally to see to everything, to know everything, to pass judgment on everything, and to decide every question. His conception of the perfect ruler was one who could say: "*I know everything.*"

His first duty, then, was to have a thorough and minute knowledge of his kingdom; he must know his subjects and the national institutions; he must have exact information upon the fertility of the soil, the variety and location of all natural resources, the income to be derived from all forms of taxes—and he must know the personal characteristics of his administrators, the mood of the nation at large, what people were thinking and saying and plotting, not merely at Court and in the large towns, but in the remotest provinces. A ruler could no more live a separate and shut-in existence than could his subjects; he must know what was happening in other countries in order to defend himself against them, if for no other reason; he must know their resources, the nature and degree of development of their commerce and industries, the size of their armies, their political plans and court secrets. He must be accurately informed upon all such matters by diplomats, agents, or special emissaries. "A man who is well informed upon all that takes place," he writes, "will not make mistakes. Thus a ruler's most obvious duty is *to take every possible precaution to know everything that is happening in his age.*"

The sovereign must know not merely what is going on about him, but also what has happened in the past; he must have a knowledge of history, especially military and political history. "I believe that an acquaintance with these great events, through the writings of men of sound judgment, helps one to arrive at important decisions. One can receive valuable hints both in military and in political tactics from a study of the illustrious men and the notable events of antiquity. . . . The only difficulty is to find time enough for such study." Louis XIV found a

way: "I resolved to set aside a definite time for this study, *just as I should have done for important problems of my own.*"

Yet, however steadily and intently he may work, a ruler can gain only a fraction of the information necessary for the conducting of a government. He must rely upon his ministers to enlighten him on all points to which he cannot give his personal attention. Not only must he hear them and receive their recommendations, but on some pretext or other he must talk with all who seem competent, seeking to inform himself and to balance the opinions of one against another and so to enlarge his point of view. For this he must be armed with great patience. "He should," writes Louis XIV, "*be able to listen even to nonsense.*"

To govern, one must not merely *know* what is happening; one must foresee what will happen and act accordingly. Everything must be carefully organized to bring this to pass; a ruler must use every means that the industry and science of the nation put at his disposal; he must rely on money, on his subordinates, and on his own unremitting energy. In this, one sees the genius of Colbert's schemes. Louis XIV shared his minister's views on most subjects and supported him vigorously. His government was a model of organization and system unsurpassed in Europe.

Too much stress cannot be placed upon the fact that the State, as Louis XIV conceived it, was a practical, scientific organization. And yet practical and reasonable though it was, it must be *just*. Louis XIV wrote extensively upon the justice of kings. He looked upon justice, mercy, and generosity as the three most important royal virtues. A Prince should vigorously suppress any

temptation to be arrogant and should, upon occasion, know how to be humble. Those who think of Louis XIV as insufferably arrogant should read and ponder this magnificent advice to the Dauphin: "Although it is proper for us to take pride in the dignity of our office, a certain modesty and humility is no less becoming. Do not think, my son, that such virtues are not for us. On the contrary, they are more appropriate in us than in the rest of mankind. If one has not achieved a position of preëminence, either by birth or by natural ability, then, no matter how little he may think of himself, he can never be humble or modest. These virtues presuppose on the part of him who practises them an importance sufficient to justify a certain vanity. But when those about you wish only to fill you with a sense of your own importance, do not, my son, compare yourself with lesser princes. Think rather of those in past centuries who are most to be envied and admired. . . . Reflect upon your own shortcomings. In so doing you will learn to be humble. But when you act as a King, and not as an individual, when it is a question of your rights and of the privileges of your crown, boldly assume the loftiness of mind and of spirit of which you will find yourself capable. Do not betray your glorious predecessors nor jeopardize the interests of those who are to follow you, *for you hold your office in trust.* In such a case humility is despicable."

Thus a King should be proud not of himself, but of his crown; he should only be haughty when it is to the interest of the State for him to be so. Louis XIV returns to this a hundred times in his "Journal" and his "Mémoires." He repeats that a Prince's one reason for existence is to serve the State, and that to this he should sacrifice his

time, his pleasure, his dearest personal wishes and, if need be, his life. The good of the State should be his only consideration. And when he says the State he means France —that France which he studied so profoundly and knew so thoroughly—the real and living France that he saw before him composed of laborers, artisans, nobles, magistrates, priests, and soldiers.

Thinking of his subjects, each in his allotted place performing his special function, he wrote in his "Journal," under the date of March 1666: "Love them all. *Remember that they are all in our service. Never take sides, but be father and judge all alike.*" Among these subjects, all of whom are contributing to "the glory and support of the monarchy" he places the common laborer in the first rank. "Laborers are even more useful than soldiers, for neither civilians nor soldiers would be able to get along without the product of their toil."

THUS this government, based upon, and organized in accordance with reason, is tempered and humanized by the Prince's sense of justice and by his paternal generosity. Having emphasized the human quality in monarchy as Louis XIV conceived it, we may now define it exactly: It is a State free from ecclesiastical interference and essentially democratic. It is democratic in that birth counts for less than personal merit. It is organized rationally and scientifically with the purpose of exploiting as intensively as possible all national resources.

CHAPTER III

THE ORGANIZATION OF MODERN FRANCE

LOUIS XIV was not the man to stop with theoretical dissertations upon government. It was the practical problems of government that interested and fascinated him. He threw himself into the task of governing efficiently with unbounded enthusiasm. As early in his reign as possible, he devoted his undivided attention to it. He was King of France in the full meaning of the word.

First of all, one should remember that no other ruler of France has ever known the country as he knew it. As long as he could walk or ride, he made long journeys through the country in all directions—from Lille to Perpignan, Bordeaux to Lyons, Havre to Strasbourg. Unlike modern statesmen, he did not hurry from point to point, getting but fleeting glimpses of towns and villages from train window or automobile. He travelled slowly and by short stages; he took stock of everything, was curious about everything. He travelled almost entirely on horseback, using a carriage only when compelled to do so by sickness or fatigue. Until he was seventy-seven years old, he was an indefatigable hunter and knew every inch

of the Ile de France, with its great forests at Rambouillet, Vincennes, Compiègne, and Fontainebleau. He knew most of the towns and even the villages where he had either stopped or visited. He knew the inns along the highways and had eaten or slept at many of them; he knew the ferries, the ports, the bridges. Not only could he recall the name of the First President at Aix or Toulouse, but he remembered his face, his eccentricities and shortcomings, his relations with the principal men of the town. Here an archbishop was on bad terms with his chapter, there the local Parlement had quarrelled with the Cour des Aides. He did not limit himself to such superficial observations; on some of his trips, such as that to Provence during the winter of 1659–1660, he undertook a minute study of that district. He also made long and careful tours of inspection to the frontiers. In 1678 he visited the fortified towns in Lorraine, passing through Sézanne, Vitry-le-François, Bar-le-Duc, and Commercy, returning by way of Stenay and the Ardennes. In 1680 he visited the fortified towns in Flanders and inspected the entire northern frontier. In 1681 he made a trip to Alsace; in 1683 to Franche-Comté. No chief of staff ever had the map of France so thoroughly in mind as he, especially in the northeastern section of the country. On the eve of the battle of Denain when there was a possibility that the army might have to retreat behind the Somme, he said to Marshal de Villars: "I know that river; it is very hard to cross." This was not said in boasting. He had become familiar with it during his campaigns and numerous travels in Picardy.

This man who knew France so well immediately turned his attention to the internal organization of the country.

His first-hand knowledge enabled him to decide which were her most pressing needs and what her most valuable resources. Both he and Colbert wished to see her active, industrious, as happy as possible, and, above all, rich. The length and number of the wars he was forced to carry on prevented him from devoting as much attention as he would have liked to the splendid progamme of reforms and innovations that he had in mind. To carry on these exhausting wars for forty years required money, always more money. Thus in the end his interest in the internal development of the country came to be associated more and more with financial problems. Taxes became of paramount importance. Everything was subordinated more or less frankly to this cruel necessity.

Even today it is generally supposed that under Louis XIV and throughout the old regime, the laborer and artisan were the only ones to suffer from the taxes. This was true only of the *taille,* preëminently a tax upon the lower classes. However, when impoverished nobles decided to cultivate their estates themselves this tax weighed on them as well. But there were many other taxes which fell equally upon all classes.

With the most firmly grounded prejudice, historians resolutely refuse to admit this. We are so thoroughly imbued with the traditional rhetoric about the "poor common people," the helpless lambs led to the slaughter! As today, the "poor common people" are the factory workers, so in those days they were the peasants—the peasants who slept on straw and died of hunger in their hovels, oppressed by the powerful and forced from their scanty

means to contribute millions to support the luxuries and debauches of the nobles.

It is true that the peasant contributed heavily to the budget of the monarchy. But we forget the burdens assumed by the higher orders: the clergy alone supported religion, public charities, education, and to a large degree the fine arts; in addition they made a voluntary gift of many millions each year to the government. The nobles met most of the expense of war and of foreign affairs. The nobleman paid for his commission to command a regiment and also equipped and supported his men at his own expense except when they were actually in the field. In foreign service ambassadors were at times assisted by the king, but as a rule they paid all of their own expenses. They received no allowance for entertainment, housing, travel, or the other heavy financial expenditures necessitated by their positions. The great lords who followed the Court from place to place did so at their own expense. When the Grande Mademoiselle accompanied Louis XIV and the Court to Lyons in 1658, she was aghast at the expense and exclaimed bitterly that it cost shockingly to ride in the carriage of a king.

It must be admitted that the highest ecclesiastics, the great holders of benefices, princes of the blood and great lords, all of whom had large revenues or rich pensions, could adequately support their station, but there were others less fortunately placed: nobles and clerics, who, to use the old phrase applied to the peasants, were "dying of hunger" on provincial estates and in decaying castles. If the nobles rushed to Versailles to court the favor of the King or Minister, it was because they could no longer

live on their own estates where the feudal dues had fallen to almost nothing.

The King was aware of this situation. He had long studied the problem of equalizing the taxes. He decided that the clergy despite their voluntary gift and the civic charges upon them, could contribute more. Already in 1666, he noted in his "Mémoires":

"Is it just that the nobles should give their services and their lives for the defence of the realm and that they should often spend their fortunes in the performance of their duty, and that the common people (who have so little money and so many mouths to feed) should bear the whole burden of the support of the state, while the ecclesiastics, not facing the dangers of war nor the burden of family expenditures, should enjoy abundantly the security of civil life without contributing to its needs."

These reflections of the King are no doubt somewhat exaggerated and biased, but it is nevertheless striking and surprising to see Louis XIV not merely accept the principle of the equal distribution of taxes—or at least a taxation based on the ability of the individual to pay—but even to urge economic theories which might easily be confused with socialism or communism. Indeed, he does not hesitate to say "kings are absolute rulers and have naturally the full right to dispose of all possessions of the state, ecclesiastical as well as secular, to use them for wise expenditures, that is to say according to the needs of the State."

Thus the State is master of the public wealth; individuals are but the stewards. Hence the king is free to tax for whatever he considers the need of the state to be.

From the beginning of his reign, Louis XIV had been

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drawn to this theory; in practice it met with bitter resistance. However, he was forced as a war measure to impose even on the privileged classes (the nobles and the clergy) the capitation tax and the tithe, an equivalent of our income tax.

This equal taxation was opposed by all. Those who made no open resistance schemed to defraud the collector, or sought exemption.

The peasants, as usual, were the most obstinate in their resistance. From time immemorial they alone had symbolized "suffering humanity." It was one of the commonplaces of clerical and parliamentary rhetoric to call the attention of the king to this "perpetually starving" class. At the beginning of his reign, Louis XIV had these plaints always in his ears. Moved to pity, eager to aid his people, he ordered a reduction of the *taille*. But little by little, after reflecting on what he saw about him and reading the reports of his comptroller-general of finance, he came to interpret the facts differently.

He quickly saw that everyone exaggerated his own distress and especially that of rural France, that behind this lay an ulterior design, quite personal and easy to penetrate. The officials who apportioned the tax-levy and who guaranteed its collection and who in the provinces where there was an assembly must obtain a voluntary grant from the province, found it to their advantage to represent the financial condition of their provinces in the darkest colors. They did this in order that the central government might not assess the inhabitants of their department too high, and that thus their task might be made easier. On the other hand the clergy and the nobles if

they wished to collect their tithes or their feudal dues had an equal interest in seeing that the taxation did not press too heavily upon their vassals, their tenants or farmers, or their parishioners, as the case might be.

From such partisan sources came these more or less sincere outcries over the acute poverty of peasants, skinned alive by the bailiff. It was claimed that they were reduced to living on bread made of acorns and drank only water—or that they gnawed roots and bark, and even cropped the grass like animals and as a result "died like flies."

Our historical hand-books constantly repeat these old tales, without verifying and examining them, without even submitting them to the test of common sense which would tell them that in any country at any time such conditions might be noted. One should not draw hasty conclusions from such anecdotes.

Not long ago a speaker in awarding a prize for valor, told of a little girl at primary school who had fainted in her seat as a result of starvation! Certainly the Michelets of the future will not fail to cite this disturbing anecdote, vouched for by a governmental official. One should remember that in the seventeenth century by "roots" were meant such vegetables as turnips, carrots, radishes, and beets. In this sense, all France still lives on "roots"—we do not pity ourselves for it!

Most similar statements, taken from official reports though they may be, refer to exceptional conditions, like war, or famine. The dates can be given: 1674, 1675; or 1693, 1697; or 1708–1709 when the severe winter destroyed the whole year's crops; the other dates represent periods when France was fighting against the allied in-

vasions. Outbreaks of civil war such as the Fronde or local uprisings brought on periods of misery.

To such causes may be added others depending on the character of the people: the sluggishness, the inertia, the deadly routine of the peasant and city laborer. Colbert, in his letter describes the state of affairs quite accurately.

But we may safely say that against each of these dismaying statements may be set another showing the opposite condition—although that in itself may prove nothing.

The Venetian ambassadors often refer to the bare French country-side and to the extreme poverty of the peasants; they repeat this formula year after year. But they also constantly refer to the financial and economic wealth of France and to the number of men at the disposal of the King. Similar flattering reports were presented by Machiavelli to the Signory of the Republic of Florence: France he described as a rich and prosperous country, where no one was in need, where the land more than supported those who lived on it. In his "Ritratti delle cose della Francia," Machiavelli asserted that the lands of the French nobles were well stocked with cattle, poultry, fish, deer. "The peasant cannot sell his wheat because his neighbors also have wheat to sell." In short France did not know what to do with her wealth.

A century later, the Italian Locatelli in his travel diary made very much the same report: France is the country of abundance, of joy, and freedom.

This all goes to prove that one impression can be matched by its opposite—one prejudice by a contrary one. It is impossible to sum up exactly what was the condition of the French peasantry—even literature and art are of little aid. La Bruyère's famous description and the paint-

ings of Lenain might seem a certain proof of the hard lot of the peasant. But in one of these very canvases of Lenain (done after the manner of Ribera—a picture of a rustic meal) there is linen on the table, white bread, and wine; the father of the family in the center of the picture is not at all the "wild beast" of the passage too often quoted from La Bruyère; his face is thin and delicate, his expression, sober, tinged with melancholy; a fine type surely and one that was an honor to the France of that day.

But, we repeat, these are but literary impressions. The hard facts can be thus stated: already under Louis XIV the ownership of the land is in many hands. The peasant —who is represented as bled white—is actually buying land and paying good cash for it. In the provinces he already owns more than half of the land. The amount paid on the *taille* has been greatly exaggerated, the feudal dues were negligible, often they amounted to no more than a carp, a few trout, a fat capon or two at Christmas or at Easter. It is estimated that in a village in Dauphiny in 1702—that is, in the period of the greatest hardship of all Louis XIV's reign—a peasant paid six francs in taxes on a moderate holding of six acres of land. Double this amount for districts such as the Ile-de-France that had an assembly, and the amount is still not heavy.

The inventories drawn up by notaries certainly show peasant wealth: silver was frequently to be found under sordid roofs. Locatelli was often astonished to see a silver service in an unpretentious tavern; he was also surprised at the comfort to be found at times, even in the most desolate hovels. In a shopkeeper's house in Joigny he noted a sharp contrast between "the shabby exterior of the house and the interior, decorated with tapestries and paint-

ings, the table laid with linen so fine and white that a prince might have been served there."

Truly the last word seems, as usual, to have been said by Voltaire in the following passage, which it is well to bear in mind after La Bruyère's rhetoric.

"People constantly find fault because of the condition of the agricultural workers. The same stories are common to all countries; *such complaints usually come from the leisure class who do so to attack the government far more than out of pity for the common people.* It is not within the scope of history to determine how much the people can contribute in taxation without being oppressed. But history shows that a city cannot flourish unless the country around it is abundantly fertile, nor can its comfort be sustained except by the hard labor of rural workers: *and such labor is always well paid.* The complaints then about rural misery no longer hold. Moreover, in these vague criticisms, no distinction is made between the peasants, the tillers of the soil and the unskilled laboring class. *But there is no country in the world where the agricultural class, the tillers of the soil, are better off than in some districts in France;* England alone can rival her in this."

Voltaire, lord of Ferney and owner of an estate, had observed the peasants closely. In stating his conclusions at the end of his "Siècle de Louis XIV," he most certainly knew the facts upon which they were based.

CERTAINLY the King understood the whole situation, he knew that frequent and flagrant injustice occurred in the collection of taxes. His instinct was always to lighten

the burdens of the lower classes as well as to repair, when possible, the wrongs of the oppressed.

Jean Berth, "an excellent potter," died at Versailles, leaving a widow and four children. The king, when told of it, said at once to Colbert, "See that something is given the widow and children of the potter who has just died at Versailles. I waive all claims of the crown upon their property." This anecdote is worth quoting, because Louis XIV sent the message from the battle-front—"the camp, before Cambrai"—with a thousand cares on his mind.

Saint-Simon tells us that in 1710 when it was necessary to levy the tax of the *Dixième,* the king could not at first bring himself to consent to it. He fretted over it for more than a week so that his health was affected, to the concern of his surgeon Mareschal. The king finally admitted that the mere thought of placing fresh burdens on his people made him suffer "great pain,'" that he had taken his troubled conscience to his confessor. Saint-Simon interprets this story in his own way: his hatred of Father Tellier and the Jesuits made him draw conclusions unfriendly to the king. But the kernel of the matter is: the mere thought of levying a new tax made Louis XIV ill. Our present ministers of finance are not so sensitive.

Towards the close of the War of the Spanish Succession those nearest Louis XIV spoke to him so often of "the misery of his people" that he came within an ace of accepting disadvantageous terms from the enemy in order to lessen the burdens of his people. Thus would his naturally warm heart move him to acts of generosity when his reason inclined him to accept another line of conduct.

Certainly he must have money to continue his wars. Their settlement was a vital question for France and to

it he gave all his energy. The organization and direction of the armies as well as all diplomatic negotiations were, except for the assistance given by Louvois, the work of the king himself. Colbert directed the department of the interior but this did not mean any lack of interest upon the part of Louis in the domestic administration: he was devoted to the service of the state in its every aspect. At Dunkirk he visited the fleet and was thrilled by the French navy. About the same time he visited the various factories at Abbéville and Beauvais. He was delighted. He called the workers together and made them a speech, the outline of which Colbert had sketched for him. No one person can do everything. It is enough that the king bent his energies to whatever tended to increase the wealth and the power of the State.

At the death of Louis XIV we see fixed the great lines on which France was reorganized and her strength renewed. In spite of all her reverses she had manufactures, commerce, colonies, harbors, a merchant marine, all capable of competing successfully with foreign powers. The administrative frame-work of modern France was laid. The king doubtless would have liked to do even more. Events stronger than his will prevented. But even so, as he himself modestly said, he had done his best.

CHAPTER IV

LOUIS XIV AND THE WORLD OF IDEAS

IN THE department of foreign affairs and of the interior, Louis XIV encountered almost insurmountable obstacles, but in the world of ideas his triumph was complete. Not only did he draw to his court writers and artists worthy of his great reign, as talented in their field as his generals and his ministers, but through him French culture, heretofore unknown, gained such prestige that for fifty years it was unrivaled in the world.

One could disregard the wars of Louis XIV and reconstruct the history of his reign entirely from its literature and science. Nothing is more fascinating than to study history in this way, for triumphs in the intellectual field are more quickly recognized and more easily achieved than in the world of events. But it would be superficial not to see that the wars of Louis XIV were his most important contribution both to France and to his own glory. Without them and without the leadership and inspiration of the King, French culture would not have attained such prestige nor would French letters have had the assurance, the tone and the style which were reflected from the royal mind.

We must assert clearly—for the fact has been questioned—that Louis XIV loved intelligence, that he was interested in and friendly to literature and literary men—at least, those who were socially gifted—and, in a general way, he cared for scientists and philosophers.

Even in love, he demanded intelligence. He admired the ugly Marie Mancini because of her brilliant and flashing mind; in the end he deserted the affectionate La Vallière because she was less intelligent than Madame de Montespan. And if the latter, ugly, rolling in fat, irascible to an extreme, could still triumph over the youthful charms of a Fontanges, it was because Mlle. Fontanges was "as stupid as a dunce." At the age of forty, when he was still in the prime of life, the King fell in love with and married the prudish Mme. Scarron, largely because she was intelligent and witty.

Louis XIV's intellectual awakening began when he was still a boy. He and Marie Mancini would often read aloud to each other; novels attracted them especially. He himself tried his hand at prose, and even at verse, although unsuccessful in the latter. He had an instinctive feeling for the French language and a natural style of his own. The reader ought not to judge him by the fragmentary "Mémoirs," which were edited by Pellisson and President de Périgny, and which so often have an air of self-consciousness and condescending grandeur. The real Louis XIV had more wit and charm, and, even more important, a feeling for style, a gift for hitting on the happy phrase and the right word; he was one who, as a leader, could make himself understood without discussion, and as a diplomat, could with complete assurance draw up a treaty. Even more than Boileau, he showed the nation

the importance of using the exact word necessary, the "*mot juste*." Benserade, when he received President de Mesmes into the Academy, praised "the sure taste of the King in his use of words. "His Majesty," he said, "has as little patience with a word misplaced as with a soldier out of line."

His natural literary gifts were supplemented by a strict course of training that has been ignored by subsequent writers Saint Simon painted Louis XIV as uneducated, illiterate, and lacking in any form of culture; most historians have been content to repeat his calumnies without verifying the facts.

It would be silly, for instance, to accept at its face value such a statement as the following by Primi Visconti: "The very sight of a book wearied him—even those dedicated to him, much as he liked to have that done. Marshal de la Feuillade told me confidentially that the King had made a unique exception in my case when he read a few pages of my "History of the Dutch War." That first sentence, taken without regard to the content, would lead one to suppose, as Saint Simon did, that Louis XIV hated to read. But continuing, it is easy to see that Primi Visconti is merely trying to impress the reader with the magnitude of the honor paid him by the King.

In a sense one might say that Louis XIV did have his reading done for him—and by the best minds of his day. So extensively was this done that Visconti is forced to admit a little further on that Louis XIV became fatigued from listening to sermons, poetry, speeches, and from reading books dedicated to him.

Forced to spend hours on end every day plodding through endless reports, letters, and despatches, why

should the King have thought it a relaxation to do still more reading?

Whether he wished it or not, he was read to continuously. He used the eyes of others to save his eyesight, overtaxed by the almost daily cabinet meetings. We are too prone to forget that, partly because he felt it his duty to listen, partly because to do so gave him pleasure, he listened patiently to practically every literary work of any importance whatsoever that was produced during his age. Much of that literature has not survived, and the ephemeral part was, of course, much more extensive than the other.

Plays, sermons, funeral orations, poems, discourses had their first hearing before him. Bossuet and Bourdaloue preached before him. It was before him that Molière's plays were produced, and for him that they were written. "Esther" and "Athalie" were written for his pleasure and edification. Racine read aloud and interpreted for him. Who today has received such a literary education as this, so broad and connected, superintended by men of such genius! Fancy hearing Racine read his plays and comment upon them!

It is not too much to claim that no one knew the literature of the century as well as Louis XIV himself.

Louis XIV never lost an opportunity of giving evidence of the esteem in which he held the arts and literature.

No other ruler treated the French Academy with such consideration as he. After the death of Chancellor Séguier, he took it upon himself to be its official patron. There is no question but that there were political motives behind this act. But the King avoided the appearance of

applying pressure, and urbanely allowed the offer to come from the Academicians themselves. He installed the Academy in his own palace, the Louvre, although Colbert suggested the Royal Library as more convenient. In the margin of Colbert's letter, the King noted in his own hand: "The Academy ought to meet at the Louvre; that seems to me the better plan, even if a little inconvenient."

The King emphasized his connection with the Academy by receiving it formally at Versailles. Pellisson in his "Histoire de l'Académie française" remarks that the King wished the Dauphin to be present "upon an occasion so complimentary to letters." The King learned the names of all the Academicians he had not previously known and said to Colbert, "You must let me know what I can do for these gentlemen." He ordered six places reserved for Academicians at each performance at the Court Theatre. The Versailles meeting was further commemorated by the striking of a medal inscribed:

APOLLO PALATINUS

ACADEMIA GALLICA INTRA REGIAM EXCERPTA
MDCLXXII

Finally, above the great stairway of the Ambassadors, he placed a relief representing the King's reception of the French Academy. This was grouped with the *Passage of the Rhine* and *Spain Humbled,* thus indicating that Louis XIV put the professions of arms and letters on an equal footing.

When the Academy completed the new edition of its dictionary, the King again received them with full honors at Fontainebleau. "Monsieur de Toureil," wrote Racine

to his friend Boileau, "came here to present the dictionary of the Academy to the King, the Queen of England, to Monsigneur, and to the ministers—"

At times the Academicians were invited to Court.

"After the King's mass," notes Bussy-Rabutin, "a dozen members of the Academy were informally present at the dinner of His Majesty who was served at a small table, Monsieur le Duc was there, Monsieur le Prince de Conti, M. de Vendôme, le duc de Roquelaure, the Comte de Gramont, the Archbishop. The King said to Monsieur de Vendôme: "You, sir, who are a man of parts should belong to the Academy." "I have no merit, Sire, but perhaps they might overlook that, since no great intelligence is necessary." "What," exclaimed the King, "not necessary? Look at Monsieur the Archbishop, Monsieur de Bussy and all these other gentlemen, if you consider intelligence not necessary." Then they spoke of the difficulties of effective oratory. The discussion lasted throughout the King's dinner; after this, the Archbishop, the ten Academicians and I went to dine with the Chamberlain. The King had commanded Livry to serve us well. *We were six hours at table,* where the health of the Protector of the Academy was not forgotten . . ."

This royal protection was not a condescension accorded an official group; the King took a deep and lively interest in men of letters, and enjoyed their company if they chanced to be sociable. He did not like old fogies like Corneille and La Fontaine, both of whom were untidy and neither one of whom opened his mouth. But his warm friendship for the greatest writers of his reign—Molière, Racine, Boileau, Bossuet—was well-known. Of these,

Bossuet was a loyal monarchist while Molière was a radical, perhaps a free-thinker. Racine and Boileau were Jansenists, and belonged to the opposition party, as we would say today. Despite this they were favorites with the King. He treated them as personal friends; he was interested not only in their work but in their success and their health. When Boileau was taking the cure at Bourbon, Racine wrote him from Paris: "Three days ago the King inquired at dinner about your throat trouble. I told him you were at Bourbon. Monsieur continued to talk about you, as did Madame, and you were the subject of conversation through half the dinner. I ran across Monsieur de Louvois the next day; he also inquired for you, and said how sorry he was that your malady was lasting so long."

Unquestionably it was generous of the King to show such warm friendship for two plain men of letters who did not hide their partisanship for Port Royal and who freely and frankly praised such exiles as Arnauld.

It has been claimed that Racine fell from grace because of his connection with Port Royal; another story has it that it was because of a petition he wrote concerning "the misery of the people." Today it has been proved not only that this petition was never written, but that Racine was never disgraced. At most there was only a slight coolness on the part of the King when Racine toward the end of his life was somewhat indiscreet in championing the Jansenists. Racine, a simple gentleman-in-waiting, was never banished at all. To the very end, he attended the parties at Marly. During his last illness, the King sought news of him with the greatest solicitude. When Racine died, His Majesty said to the aged Boileau, then feeble and deaf as a post,

JEAN BAPTISTE RACINE
DE L'ACADEMIE FRANÇOISE
ORDINAIRE DU ROY
Dessiné à Paris le 24 Avril 1699 âgé de 59 ans
Apres avoir atteint le Sommet du Parnasse,
Et charmé par ses Vers les plus rares Esprit;
Il a quitté l'éclat d'une Gloire qui passe,
Pour chercher en Dieu seul une Gloire sans prix.

RACINE

"We have both suffered a great loss, in the death of poor Racine."

Perhaps never, except at the death of his mother, did the habitually restrained and reticent Louis XIV, express such deep grief at the loss of a dear friend as is found in those few simple words about Racine. The remark was not just a casual and graceful way of dismissing the subject of Racine's death. A friend of Boileau records that the conversation "lasted more than an hour."

This royal recognition of letters and literary men was a new note at court; it displeased many important personages there. Through his patronage, Louis XIV exemplified the modern attitude toward art.

Primi Visconti, was frankly indignant at the attitude of most French courtiers toward men of letters. "In France they honor only military titles. Literary and professional men are treated with contempt; a nobleman who writes well is considered as having lost caste. I know that the Urfé family think it a disgrace that their grandfather, Honoré d'Urfé, wrote the poem (*sic*) 'Astrée.'" Bussy-Rabutin, himself a fine type of cavalry officer, had only scorn for nonentities like Racine and Boileau. "People like that," he said, "whom the King allows at Versailles." Once Bussy-Rabutin came near caning Boileau for a facetious remark made at his expense.

In another passage Bussy-Rabutin discloses his attitude toward erudition and lterature with delicious naïvete: "It is true that the nobility is well represented in the Academy. However, it is always a good plan to include a number of literary men among the members, because they are industrious and will complete the work on the dictionary; for, of course, persons of our class could hardly be ex-

pected to devote ourselves to such an occupation." How delightful!

Louis XIV was not so scornfully aristocratic.

Louis XIV not only respected, but actually liked literature and men of letters, but he did so as a King—as a man of the seventeenth century and not as a twentieth century æsthete and dilettante. He did not believe in "art for art's sake"—neither did he understand science nor foresee the importance it was to assume toward the end of the nineteenth century. Judged by contemporary standards he may seem backward; in his own age he was almost radical.

Louis XIV was thoroughly convinced that intelligence was a force—a great force—and this being so, it was his obvious duty to make this force serve the State and to prevent its being used against it.

Louis XIV also realized the power of public opinion and began to press that, as well as literature, into the service of the State. He organized an elaborate system of propaganda long before the Germans had even conceived of such an idea. To prepare for his wars and to carry them on, he had to sway European opinion by what amounted to newspaper campaigns. To increase the prestige of France he distributed pensions and gifts to writers and scholars throughout Europe—in Holland, Germany, England, Italy. This proselyting was done with perfect taste and discretion. Nothing was required of those favored except that they think well of His Most Christian Majesty and upon occasion say as much.

The foreigners themselves responded eagerly to the flattery. At the Villa Medici in Rome there is still a statue—

the work of an Italian sculptor, a contemporary of Bernini, which represents Louis XIV as a Roman emperor trampling under foot the globe of the world. The French would never have ventured such fulsome flattery.

We could have learned much on the eve of the World War from Louis XIV's system of propaganda.

Literature and art, he held, should serve the state. The French language should become an instrument of conquest. In newly annexed territories such as Roussillon, Franche-Comté, Flanders, and Alsace, his first act was to open schools and to teach French to his new subjects. Cooperating fully with him, the Jesuits proved marvellously adept at imbuing French ideals in these new subjects. At Strasbourg, Perpignan, Gray, Salins, Béthune, Arras, and elsewhere Jesuit institutions became outposts of French culture.

Neither did the king wish foreign languages to be neglected in France. Never were Italian and Spanish more generally studied in France than during his reign. After the advance toward the Rhine in 1670, there was widespread interest in German. Racine had his eldest son, who was attached to our embassy at The Hague, study it vigorously.

Thus he made language serve both king and country. This new attitude is reflected in Racine's speech before the French Academy, which deserves serious thought. In it the great creator of "Phèdre" and "Athalie" remarked that "every syllable, every word, of our language is precious, for it is one more instrument with which to serve the glory of our august Protector."

Most of the writers of that period accepted this discipline with pride and with patriotic joy. Like Louis XIV

they felt themselves born to serve the state. Their personal and private feelings were of slight importance; only the public welfare mattered. The glory of the king was the glory of France, and was necessary for the prosperity of the kingdom. What the king felt and thought was what was felt and thought by the best of his subjects; he was the constant and universal hero of poems, discourses, tragedies, comedies, romances—the hero-type of the classic period.

Writers and artists, far from being degraded, gained personal distinction from this service. Louis XIV made Racine a gentleman-in-waiting—a signal honor—and gave him an apartment at Versailles, a still greater honor. In conversation, the King called him "the great poet"; Madame de Maintenon referred to him as "the sublime poet." In the list of pensions for 1663, Pierre Corneille is described as the "first dramatic writer of the world"—just as Louis XIV, in the eyes of his subjects as well as of foreigners, was "the greatest king in the world."

But too much stress should not be placed upon this connection between literature and the service of the state. Louis XIV himself did not do so. He cared genuinely for literature and loved it for itself, deeply and simply, like any other cultivated man of the time.

He was passionately fond of the theatre. He interested himself in the production of a play, the stage setting, the grouping, with the zeal and enthusiasm of an impresario. He was a good critic of music and the opera. In the midst of his many tasks he kept track of the latest trends in oratory, poetry, tragedy, and comedy. "My father," said Louis Racine, "read the king the last three epistles of

Boileau; the latter had been in the habit of reading his own writings to His Majesty."

What sovereign, what president, what prime minister has ever shown a more flattering interest in a writer? For fifty years Louis XIV was the official "protector" of the French Academy. He should have the honor of remaining in the eyes of posterity the great patron of French letters.

CHAPTER V

HIS MOST CHRISTIAN MAJESTY

AND now that we have followed the main courses of his career and have examined the principal facets of his character, we have still to note what an extraordinary type of king was this man who combined such varied qualities. He seems in a way to have been everything that a king should and can be; he has, as it were, fixed forever our conception of royalty.

No writer, no scholar, no general ever gave the world so exalted, so splendid an idea of what France is as did Louis XIV. Before him, the kings of France had been a narrow, penurious, provincial breed, lacking distinction and glory. He taught France to be sober and industrious, but unstinting when it was a matter of national honor. He opened up her vast natural and economic resources. Everywhere he established order and beauty, and gave them an air of distinction.

He was a constructive thinker; he had an all-inclusive ideal of what the State should be and wished to subject everything to it. He insisted that reason and intelligence be brought to bear upon everything; earlier in his reign he attempted to submit even religion to that rule. But of all spiritual forces, the religious sentiment is the most dif-

ficult to mould. Unlimited monarch though he was, he was quick to sense this fact. In the end, instead of bending religion to the demands of state, he himself submitted to the discipline of religion. Not only did His Most Christian Majesty find in the faith of his fathers his only comfort in hours of discouragement, but he drew from it the supreme achievement and lent to it the supreme beauty of his ideal of kingship.

It is noticeable that the chapel at Versailles is at one side of the main building. This shocked the Spanish, who thought the King's chapel should be in the centre of the palace. His Catholic Majesty was but the representative of His Divine Majesty. The real possessor of the royal seat was God, the Omnipotent; first it was the House of God, and only secondarily that of the king.

The chapel at Versailles, especially as it first appeared with its surmounting lantern, looked down on the rest of the structure. Both the prominence of the chapel and the fact that it was not joined to the palace were deliberate; the symbolism of the arrangement is of assistance in understanding the attitude of His Most Christian Majesty toward religion.

His constant care, shared with Colbert and Le Tellier, his Gallican advisors, was to distinguish sharply between the temporal and the spiritual orders: the two run in parallel lines and no doubt meet in infinity but in practical life, he felt that they should never be confused. In the administration of the temporal affairs of the kingdom, religion was to be a thing apart, as is the chapel at Versailles. Louis XIV allowed no interference from the church in affairs of state; the Pope could no more inter-

fere than bishops or heads of religious orders. No one was more earnest than he in defending the rights of the political state; no one could be more firm than he, if occasion required it—even to the Sovereign Pontiff himself.

In 1662, when the Pope's Corsican Guard came into conflict with French citizens in Rome, Louis XIV wrote to Alexander VII—who favored Austria and was politically hostile to France: "We have ordered Sieur de Bourelmont, auditor of the Rota, to ascertain whether Your Holiness approves of what your soldiers have done, or whether you wish to accord us satisfaction in proportion to the gravity of the offense, an open and flagrant violation of the law of nations. *We make no request of Your Holiness in the matter. You have so long refused our requests and you have exhibited thus far such aversion for what concerns our person and our crown that it would be better for you to base your actions on what your own prudence dictates; we shall regulate ours upon them.*"

Yet the man who wrote this fiery letter still called himself "His Most Christian Majesty and eldest son of the Church." Nor did he regard these titles as empty words; he sincerely wished all France, like himself, to be Christian. He looked upon religion as essential—and he felt in conscience bound to make it a part of the life of his people. Religion dominated every other interest in his busy life, even as the cross upon his chapel at Versailles towered above his royal residence.

But France was not to be governed like a religious order; the spiritual should not impinge upon the secular. Christian perfection is a problem for the individual. It is well for monks, priests and religious in their convents and churches and in the silence of their consciences to practice

the ecclesiastical rules in all their austerity. But these strict rules of practice should not be imposed on the great body of Christian people; they would be stirred to opposition. Heaven should not weigh too heavily upon Earth. From the moment of our entrance into this world it matters much that this life should not be rendered insupportable by the anxiety over the next. Furthermore—and this applies particularly to France—the interests of religion should not conflict too sharply with national interests.

These seemed to Louis XIV, at least at the beginning of his reign, the fundamental rules upon which he and his councillors must insist. Religion must not become a tyranny. Hence his attitude toward the Inquisition. Where the Inquisition still existed, as in Rousillon, he suppressed it in spite of the resistance of the Holy See and those immediately concerned. His enemies accused Louis XIV, as they had Mazarin before him, that his political conduct was thoroughly unchristian. The truth is, he found it necessary to use their own weapons against men who were themselves unchristian. He believed he could do no less and still live up to the responsibility which God had placed upon him.

As King of France his first duty was to administer the affairs of France. As a Christian monarch, he believed the service of France, the most Christian nation and eldest Daughter of the Church, to be at the same time the service of God and of the Church.

Likewise can be explained his attitude toward all the religious problems of his reign: the lapsing of ecclesiastical benefices, the Declaration of Rights of the Gallican

Church, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Jansenism, Quietism.

In principle at least he never overstepped his authority and entered the realm of religion; he judged religious questions from a purely political point of view—as King of France, not as a theologian. He defended his own authority and the authority of the laity, as he did that of the state. . . . . .

If he considered Protestants, Jansenists, and Quietists to be enemies of the State, it was because these sects or groups under cover of religion were sowing dissension throughout the nation and weakening it in the face of the enemy. It was only too true that the Port Royal party and the Huguenots had ideas about monarchical government that did not harmonize at all with the ideal of absolute monarchy favored by the king.

The Huguenots, even in their quietest and most submissive moments, were likely to be negotiating with foreign powers. Before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes they had often sought to get both Spain and England to dismember France. After the Revocation, they began anew, assisted by Holland, England, and Switzerland. During the War of the Spanish Succession, they nearly succeeded in betraying southern France to the English. Their methods were the same as those of the Princes and Parlementarians during the Fronde. Like the rest of those belated mediævalists, sectional, caste, or sectarian interest seemed to them paramount to matters of national importance. They had not achieved the modern conception of patriotism which was behind the policies of the king: that the interests of the State, that is of France, must at all costs be put before every other consideration.

However, try as he might, Louis XIV was never able to separate wholly the spiritual power from the temporal. A few times—and purely for reasons of statecraft—he lost his way in the spiritual domain. His differences with Innocent XI prove that his political conscience troubled him; in the end he did confuse the two powers, both because of his innate piety and his exalted conception of his title, "Most Christian Majesty." He did not revoke the Edict of Nantes, and persecute Protestants and Jansenists, from a purely political motive; he was also prompted by reasons of faith. The moment a vital religious truth was at stake, it seemed to him a betrayal of his people to deny them the benefit of this truth. Thus, confusing his attributes with those of another Power, he became both theologian and missionary. He over-stepped his powers and fell into strange and sometimes deplorable abuses of authority.

This was directly due to his deep faith. He was a Christian, as men were in those days, with a sober, reasoned clarity, a solidity of doctrine rare today. It is sentimental nonsense to look upon the middle ages as the great period of faith and refuse that title to the seventeenth century. Is it conceivable that the century that produced Pascal, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Marguerite-Marie was not in the strictest sense of the word a Christian century!

And why should Gothic cathedrals be thought more Christian than those of the classic revival? The symbolism and the imagery in the chapel at Versailles are as deeply religious as any to be found in the Sainte Chapelle. From the standpoint of art, such churches as the Inva-

lides, St. Sulpice, Val-de-Grace and above all the astonishing chapel at Versailles are structures worthy the highest admiration. One might even maintain that this architecture is more truly French than that of the Middle Ages, since it expresses more clearly the spirit of the race, and its taste for simplicity, clarity, good sense, and restraint, while the former, with its oriental influences, is over ornate, and even at times touches upon the extravagant.

But what does art matter if hearts are not deeply Christian! Were they ever more so than in the seventeenth century? No one wished to die at enmity wth God or without the rites of the Church. A considerable number of heroic and edifying deaths are recorded, especially on the part of some who had given scandal during their lifetime. Notable was the Christian death of the Princess Palatine—not to mention some more famous—the Duchess La Vallière, Mme. de Montespan, Mme. de Monaco (who "no longer looked like a human being" when she died)—or even criminals like la Brinvilliers or la Voison. In the Paris of that day capital executions were almost of daily occurrence; they attracted great throngs eager for savage emotion. But when in the Place de Grève the victim knelt before the block and his confessor from the scaffold chanted the *Salve Regina,* the whole throng knelt with the condemned man and chanted this hymn of tenderness and mercy and in this moment of splendid and poignant religious exaltation purified itself of its morbid curiosity.

There was no fear of death. It was met firmly and was prepared for in advance. A minister, like Pontchartrain, believing his hour near, would give up his position

and despite the pleading of the King and of his nearest friends, retire to an Oratory to devote his remaining days to meditation upon death. Indeed faith was never more sober nor more far-reaching, never more intelligent; never was reason more obedient, more conscious of its limitations.

In this as in all else, the King served as an example to his contemporaries. He was a marvellous type of the French Christian of the classic epoch.

He was a model parishioner whether at Paris, at St. Germain, or at Versailles. He made his first communion at Saint-Eustache in Paris; later when he moved to the Louvre, Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois was his parish church. There he passed the *pain benit* with great ceremony, to the accompaniment of fife and drum, and he assisted at all the offices, and at the Stations of the Cross during Holy Week, or the jubilees. The same was true at Versailles. The chapel of the palace was his private oratory. It was at his parish church that he received Communion on the great feast days—in all four or five times a year, at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, the Feast of the Assumption, and All Saints. It was from the parish church that he walked bare-headed to follow the procession of Corpus-Christi or on the Feast of the Assumption. His parish priest was a personage at Court. One such priest, the Curé Hébert, was consulted with deference by the King and Madame de Maintenon. It was he who condemned as too frivolous the plays given at Saint-Cyr.

Besides his duties as a Christian, Louis XIV made it a point of honor to fulfill all his obligations as king (for he

never differentiated between the man and the sovereign). Not only did he observe strictly the fasts and abstinences of Lent—an almost reckless gesture for one whose appetite was abnormally great—but every morning he read the office of the Holy Ghost (it is, to be sure, very short) he washed the feet of twelve paupers on Good Friday, in commemoration of the Last Supper, and after having wiped them, kissed them. Each time he received Communion, the King, upon leaving the parish church, laid hands upon the sick. In June and August he did so despite the summer heat. Hundreds and even thousands of sick persons —most of them afflicted with scrofula or other contagious diseases—waited in the courtyard at Versailles or under the high arches of the Orangerie—a spectacle of misery and suffering to be seen today only at Lourdes. The King appeared on foot, the great collar of the Order of the Holy Ghost about his neck, suffocating under the heavy mantle of black velvet picked out with tongues of flames —and in this costume he walked for hours between the ranks of sick and dying, pronouncing the touching phrase: "May God heal you. The King touches you."

He did this not as the whim seized him, but every year, and many times a year, until the end of his life. When death was near, despite his gangrened and emaciated body, he forced himself for a last time to visit the other dying victims. On the 8th of June 1715 the *Gazette de France* published "The King has received Communion and touched the sick." How many were there that day? On the 22d of May 1701 there were two thousand four hundred in the great court of Versailles. Surely, St. Louis himself never did anything more beautiful, more tenderly charitable.

THE piety of the King was marked by an attachment to the two great devotions with which France of the seventeenth century met the negations of Protestantism—the Rosary and the Blessed Sacraments—the one devoted to the Blessed Virgin and the other reaffirming the real presence in the Eucharist. All sermons in those days were prefaced by the recitation of the *Ave Maria*. The French devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was so intense and so publicly expressed that it somewhat shocked foreigners, even those who were themselves Catholics. While travelling in France the Abbé Locatelli wrote "The Most Holy Sacrament seems the one object of French faith."

The King was on a par with his simplest subjects in these matters. Judged by externals his faith was as simple as that of the humblest charcoal-burner. He always carried a rosary in his pocket. In the chapel at Versailles, he told his beads. The partaking of the Blessed Sacrament was always a public act of faith and adoration which made the thrill of the Real Presence seize those present.

The King accompanied the Viaticum to the bedside of the dying. As has been noted, during his unlawful affair with Madame de Montespan, he had a first wave of contrition on meeting a priest carrying the Viaticum to a dying officer. This Tender Victim offered up for the sins of the world rose before him and barred his path. This event marked the beginning of his increasing devoutness. Not that his faith burned fitfully; on the contrary, it was deep and sincere; even his own grave faults did not break it down. During service, he was almost constantly on his knees; his concentrated interest expressed so high an understanding of the mysteries before him that his piety was reflected even in the courtiers themselves.

One may see still his place in chapel at the left corner of the royal tribune; facing the altar, he knelt in adoration upon a velvet cushion, while the court faced him, as though it reached God only through this royal intermediary. The beauty of the ceremony, the rich tone of the organ, the melody of violins and human voices added splendor to the scene. It was so beautiful that a young Protestant woman, Mme. de Caylus, said she would change her faith if she could hear the mass of the King every day.

There were those who did not understand Louis XIV and thought his piety formal and superficial. Fénelon wrote to Madame de Maintenon that the King had "not the least idea of his duties," nor of true piety. Madame de Maintenon herself believed that God had sent her to turn the King from his evil ways and to assure his salvation. Every morning she recited a prayer that her spiritual director, Godet des Marais, Bishop of Chartres, had composed for her use.

"O Lord, my God, Thou hast placed me where I am. Thou, who dost rule the hearts of sovereigns, deign to open that of the King that I may assist in placing therein the healing grace that Thou dost desire!"

Along with the group around her, Madame de Maintenon thought she was instructing the King in subjects of which he was ignorant and bestowing upon him a religious education. The King, it should be repeated, was neither a mystic nor a theologian, but he was not ignorant in matters of religion. He had been instructed by theologians like Bossuet, moralists like Bourdaloue, and for more than fifty years he followed with a keenness of attention, abundantly testified to, innumerable sermons including the

special discourses during Lent and Advent. This created a complete body of instruction in which all the truths of Christianity were formulated, expounded, and explained. Except for trained theologians, no one alive today has had a more complete and well-rounded religious education than Louis XIV had.

The King was never spared because of the unpleasantness of the truth to be expounded. We have a copy of a searing sermon by Bourdaloue "Upon Impurity," in which the priestly orator relentlessly unveiled, in the presence of the whole Court, the depravity of the royal mistress and the "debasement" of her lover, who in his unlawful passion had lost all sense of the spiritual life. Mascaron attacked the military service with a severity which would today bring him before the courts on a charge of pacifism.

On the fifth of March 1675 Madame de Maintenon wrote: "I listened to a splendid sermon by Père Mascaron. He spoke a bit too strongly against the spirit of conquest and defined a hero as a thief who at the head of an army did what the ordinary thief must do alone. It did not please the master." Quite naturally!

In the matter of his unlawful liaisons, in the end the King submitted and mended his ways. But he protested against the charge of pride and ambition and attempted to justify himself. He resolutely refused to sacrifice interests of State merely because he was accused of desiring military glory. In this matter the religious party, Madame de Maintenon at its head, was guilty of mischievous interference. Had they been able, they would have forced the King into grave political errors. As for pride, the King denied that he had it as an individual, but asserted that as King of France he was entitled to a legiti-

mate pride. In his "Mémoires," he even explains why he chose the Sun as his emblem and adopted the motto *Nec pluribus impar:* he gives them a meaning far removed from pride or foolish vanity.

To the end the King resisted the attempts of this religious group—Fénelon, the Duc de Beauvillier, Madame de Maintenon—to force upon him a type of piety that he considered unbefitting a King. Cardinal de Noailles asked him to forbid balls and plays at Court. They urged upon him a mass of minor devotions, constant attendance upon vespers, complines, and other services. The King refused. He knew that France was not to be turned into a convent. His Most Christian Majesty would be neither monk nor priest. Like the artists of his day, he objected to the confusing of types.

His death was singularly beautiful. To the end he performed his royal duties, addressing himself to the tasks that demanded his attention. On his deathbed he took steps which he believed might avoid difficulties under the regency. At last, when he had attended to everything and knew that death was near, the firmness of his faith and the consciousness of having done his duty, gave him the strength of mind to meet that formidable struggle. He became entirely detached from the world and turned toward God—quite without fear, but on the other hand, affecting no unseemly assurance, in full possession of his senses, King to the last, and dominating completely the group about him. At his request the Holy Viatiacum was brought and Extreme Unction administered. As his malady became worse, he recited aloud with his servitors

the prayers of the dying. He submitted to further suffering in expiation of his sins.

He deplored all the evil he had done. He was in particular aware of having asked too much of his subjects; for this he could but throw himself upon the mercy of God, who knew the integrity of his intentions. But he regretted nothing in his royal programme. Those who rely upon the evidence of Saint-Simon claim that he advised his heir not to imitate him in his taste for war and for splendid buildings. That is either quite false or his words were distorted. The other witnesses do not mention buildings; and as for his wars, the King's true thought is not to be found not in what he said on his death-bed, but in the instructions he wrote out for the young Louis XV some time before his last illness. This document concludes with the words: "My son, put your whole confidence in God. Be first a Christian and then a King. Let your moral life give no grounds for reproach. Give thanks to the Divine Providence which so obviously protects this kingdom. Set for your people the same sort of example that a Christian father sets for his family. Think of them as your children; make them happy if you would yourself be happy. Relieve them as soon as possible of the taxes made necessary by our long wars, to which in their fidelity they have so patiently submitted. Give them the blessings of a long peace which alone can restore the strength of the kingdom. Always prefer peace to the doubtful issue of war, and remember, my son, that the most brilliant victory costs too much when paid for with the blood of your people. Blood should never be shed unless it be for the greater glory of God. Such conduct will

draw the Divine blessing upon you and upon your reign. Receive now my own blessing with my last tokens of affection."

In these lines, the King disavows nothing. He too had always preferred peace to war—and had waged only the wars of "necessity." He merely urges upon his successor a more Christian policy than he himself had followed and if possible to carry on war only for the greater glory of God: advice quite natural from a dying man.

However, attempts were unquestionably made to trouble his mind and to instill in him a feeling of remorse for the great things he had accomplished. He was not spared this supreme agony. If only instead of the mute and shadowy souls attendant upon his death, there had been to comfort him one of those old companions of his valiant youth—one such balanced spirit as Bossuet who wrote for him this courageous advice: "*When a King,*" the great Bishop wrote, "*is forced to make war, he should do so vigorously.* He protects his country from invasion and by causing his arms to be feared, makes durable peace possible. By the same act he upholds his own glory and the public good: for the glory of the Prince is the ornament and support of the State. By the cultivation of the arts and sciences, he promotes his country's welfare. His prosecution of great public works such as harbors or great architectural monuments, quite aside from their public utility, gives to his reign a glory which serves to maintain that respect of royal power which is so necessary for the good of the world. Thus, no matter what his actions, the Prince will have in mind, the welfare of his neighbor, the true service demanded of him by God . . ."

Yes, it is Bossuet of whom one thinks at that tragic mo-

ment; it is he whom one sees leaning over his dying master and saying to him: "Sire, sleep in peace. You have served well both your God and your country!"

But there was none to bring him this parting consolation. He died alone, abandoned by all, save for a few servants, as he had been abandoned before in the most critical moment of his reign. In spite of this, in spite of the bitterness and the agony, he maintained to the end his steadfastness of soul, crying out only when his suffering was too great. "O God, give me aid: hasten to succor me!" After a long agony, which ended Sunday, September first, 1715, at fifteen minutes after eight in the morning, he expired without complaining at his cruel desertion. Madame de Maintenon, fearing insult, had left Versailles on Friday evening. A few days later, she wrote to the Princess des Ursins these truthful words, truthful at least in all that concerns his death: and repeated by Massillon from the pulpit: "Madame, I saw the King die like a saint and like a hero."

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